

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Town of Becket

2004



Prepared By



This document was prepared with funding from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Executive Office of Transportation and Construction, Department of Housing and Community Development, and Department of Economic Development.



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Acknowledgements

Members of the Mullen House Task Force acting as Becket's Community Development Plan Committee worked tirelessly for over two (2) years to provide the town with a vision for the future in Open Space, Transportation, Economic Development, and Housing. It should be acknowledged that without the dedicated hours of assistance and technical support by these Committee Members this report could not have been completed.

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Thank you for helping identify and plan for Becket's future!

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN TOWN OF BECKET



Introduction to the Community Development Plan Program



Introduction

Introduction

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Introduction to the Community Development Plan Program

On January 21, 2000, then Governor Paul Cellucci issued Executive Order 418, a measure designed to help communities plan for new opportunities while balancing economic development, transportation infrastructure improvements, and open space preservation.

Technical assistance and grants of up to \$30,000 were made available to assist communities in producing Community Development Plans. Community Development Plans are intended to provide guidance as cities and towns consider options and priorities for future development. The plan was to focus on housing, economic and community development, transportation, and open space. The plan was also to include strategies for how the community will develop housing that is affordable to families and individuals across a broad range of incomes.

The Town of Becket completed an Open Space Plan in 1989 and updated that plan in 1998. However the Town had not prepared a more comprehensive in its recent history. The Town chose to participate in the Community Development Plan (CDP) program as an opportunity to build on some of the goals and objectives of its 1998 Open Space Plan and to address other specific issues and concerns that were identified during the community development pre-planning and planning process. The Town chose to focus most of its CDP resources toward preparing the basis for a Village Plan for the North Becket Village area, which serves as the community's recreational, cultural, educational and economic hub. The proposed development of the Mullen House Education and Visitors Center in the North Becket Village is key component of the Plan. The CDP was to also identify the community's affordable housing needs and opportunities. Finally the CDP would also provide for modernized GIS maps of the towns resources and land uses and consider suitable future uses.

The plan resulted in a series of recommended actions to guide growth and development in the Town of Becket and a number of specific proposals for improvements to revitalize the North Becket Village area.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN TOWN OF BECKET



Executive Summary



Executive Summary

The Community Development Planning process was directed by the Town's Mullen House Task Force acting as the Community Development Plan Advisory Committee. The Task Force was appointed by the Select Board and consisted of 10 members who represented a broad range of community interests and opinions. Other Town Boards and local residents participated at various stages of the process, which lasted nearly two and one half years. The Advisory Committee held 20 public meetings related to the development of the CDP. The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission acted as lead consultant in preparing the plan and providing staff support and technical assistance and the GIS mapping components.

During the course of the CDP planning process it was evident that a central concern of the town was to maintain and revitalize the North Becket Village area as the economic and cultural hub of the community. The process also identified that the primary catalyst for revitalizing the Village area was the renovation and conversion of the Historic Mullen House Property into a local educational and visitor's center that will serve as an anchor for future Village improvements and revitalization. Much of this Plan focuses on proposals and recommended actions for improvements to the North Becket Village area. A summary of the Plan findings and recommendations are provided below.

Housing Element

The housing profile and needs assessment indicated that Town of Becket, like many other small towns in Berkshire County, does not have a single housing unit that qualifies for the Chapter 40B affordable housing inventory. The assessment also indicated that about 35% of Becket households are of low to moderate income. The cost of existing housing has been rising significantly in Becket, though there is still some existing housing stock that is reasonably priced, as compared to other areas of southern Berkshire County. The cost of new homes being built in Becket has risen significantly since the late 1990s. The assessment also found that a significant number of housing units aging, decrepit and have building code violations, particularly in areas where summer lake cottages have been converted to year around use. Overall, there are still a number of homes that are affordable across a broad range of incomes. However, the affordability analysis did indicate some small gaps in affordability at the low and moderate-income levels. The Town also has a very small supply of rental units (about 4% of total housing stock) that are affordable relative to rental units in neighboring communities.

The following recommendations were developed to expand affordable housing opportunities in Becket:

- Develop local capacity to address housing needs
- Review local zoning to minimize barriers to affordable housing
- Continue participation in Housing Rehabilitation Programs
- Consider options for development of affordable rental housing
- Consider options for development of affordable homeownership options

- Consider the adoption of the Community Preservation Act to finance future affordable homeownership options
- Re- apply for EO418 Housing recertification for Becket

Economic Development Element

The Economic Development Element provides an economic profile of the Town of Becket then focuses on a more detailed analysis of the Town's most prominent commercial area, the North Becket Village. This element provides socio-economic background data and a comprehensive inventory of physical assets and land uses in the North Becket Village Area. The existing conditions of the North Becket Village are documented and analyzed through narrative, photographs and GIS mapping products. The economic development element provides a summary of the Village area's challenges and opportunities as related to economic development. Site specific information including conceptual designs related to the development of the proposed Mullen House Education/Visitor Center are also discussed in detail.

There are three primary and immediate challenges facing the North Becket Village in terms of economic development, 1) loss of key businesses, services, and jobs 2) loss of character/identity as the economic, cultural and civic center of the Town, and 3) under-utilization of valuable spaces within the village area. In addition to the primary challenges , there are also a number of secondary challenges that will also be discussed these include; public resistance to local (particularly commercial) development , regulatory obstacles to commercial development and lack of adequate infrastructure.

The improve economic conditions in the North Becket Village area the following goals and recommended actions were provided:

Goal – Support retention and growth of existing business in the village area and support limited new commercial uses in the Village area

Recommended Actions

- Build local organizational capacity to support economic development efforts in the village area.
- Develop guidelines to ensure that commercial development is localized, small-scale and compatible with the character of the village and the community at large.
- Review local by-laws to ensure that they do not pose barriers to the type of commercial development activities that would be most suitable in North Becket Village.
- Identify programs and organizations that can assist the town in developing a program for retention of successful existing businesses.
- Identify and support local establishments that are successful and may be considering expansion. Once identified connect these businesses with appropriate organizational and financial resources (e.g. grants, low-interest loans, investment tax credits, community development corporations etc..)

Goal – Maintain traditional character of North Becket Village as the Town's Economic, Cultural and Social Center

Recommended Actions

- Invest in streetscape improvements to revitalize the Village area

- Consider improvements to highlight the Historic District
- Paint and maintain the appearance of the trestle bridge on High Street.
- Remove abandoned vehicles along Pleasant Street and make efforts to improve general appearance along this street.
- Establish a local Community Clean-up Day and/or an “Adopt a River or Road Program” for the Village area.
- Establish system of walking trails that link the numerous venues in the Village area to one another including linkages to natural attractions such as Shaker Mill Brook.
- Improve circulation for vehicular and pedestrian traffic
- Maintain , preserve and promote the Village’s cultural treasures, i.e. the Arts Center and the Athenaeum

Goal - Rehabilitate key sites and buildings in the Village area and support full utilization or conversion to other suitable uses (in-fill development)

Recommended Actions

- Consider applying for funding to develop and implement a sign and façade improvement program and/or downtown revitalization program for the village area.
- Begin efforts to rehabilitate/redevelop lumber yard site
- Begin construction and rehabilitation of Mullen House Education and Visitor Center

Transportation Element

The transportation element consists of a Bicycling and Pedestrian Report that focuses on an assessment of bicycling and pedestrian safety and compatibility primarily within the North Becket village area. The report is informed by a compilation of technical data, field observations and input from the local community. The report provides analysis of the existing conditions in the North Becket Village and makes recommendations for a number of enhancements to improve the conditions for cycling and walking in the village area. The report also discusses the development of a network of off-road pedestrian trails that link various village venues and improve access and parking for key recreational areas. A map of the proposed trail network is also included. The key recommendations of the report are noted below.

Cycling Recommendations

- ❑ Consider Bicycling safety enhancements (cycling signage, shoulder upgrades, pavement marking upgrades) for the following areas in and approaching the Village Area:
 - o YMCA Road from Rte. 8 to Hamilton Road
 - o Route 8 from YMCA Road to Beaver Creek Farm
 - o McNerney Road from Brooker Hill Road to County Road
 - o High Street from Route 8 to Depot Street
- ❑ Consider installing bike racks in a central location in the Village—ideally, the Mullen House Education Center site.
- ❑ Work with regional organizations, such as the Berkshire Bike Path Council, to identify and apply for funding to implement proposed enhancements.
- ❑ Work with regional organizations, such as the Berkshire Bike Path Council, to explore potential linkages to the established regional bicycling trail network.

Walking Recommendations

- ❑ Extend sidewalk network in Village area
- ❑ Enhance pedestrian safety on Route 8 from the North Becket Cemetery to McNerney Road by extending sidewalk or developing a walking path.
- ❑ Coordinate with local and regional stakeholder groups to refine and prioritize identified walking trail proposals.
- ❑ Determine or assign a lead group to coordinate trail development and implementation efforts.
- ❑ Visit other area trails to determine what key design features and accessory facilities are necessary and desirable.
- ❑ For trails proposals that have been identified as requiring easements, approach property owners to determine willingness to cooperate.
- ❑ Seek funding from the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Recreational Trails program and other sources for advanced planning, design and implementation of trail network.

Open Space Element

This element of the Community Development Plan (CDP) is intended to build upon the goals and objectives outlined in these early plans by focusing effort and discussion specifically on the North Becket Village area. The community has identified this area as having a high level of importance and significance to the character of the Town as a whole. The North Becket Village is also viewed as an area of Town that is experiencing a significant transition and is working to maintain its traditional village character and identity. This element of the plan describes some of the important cultural, historical and natural assets in the Village area and provides recommendations for expanding recreational opportunities and safe and secure access to these opportunities. A summary of the Goals and recommendations are provided below.

Goal: Restore or revitalize properties that do not fit in with the general character of the village, or have become rundown or contaminated over the years, in order to have a cohesive appearance in the village.

Recommended Actions

Consider acquiring and converting former lumberyard for community use.

- Contact property owner to discuss possibility of selling or leasing the land for other uses
- Seek funding to have site assessed for contamination
- Determine potential use of site based on contamination results and/or clean up proposals
- Consider acquiring lot for Community Gardens, Community Supported Agriculture or to extend the Municipal Park
- Identify potential parties to develop the property

Move forward on final design and construction of the Mullen House Education Center

- See Economic Development Element for details.

Goal: *Improve appearance, safety, and accessibility of existing and new open spaces and recreational facilities and extend opportunities for family based recreation, particularly swimming, fishing and passive recreation.*

Recommended Actions

Make improvements to municipal park facilities

- Research possibilities for building a covered bridge (*See Sheffield covered bridge project*). Raising funds and attracting the help of local builders/carpenters who would volunteer their services as a match to any grants that may be available
- Research the likelihood of the neighboring property being available to buy and how the town would raise funds to purchase it
- Assess support for a concert staging area and who would organize the concerts, and the cost for building it. Research raising money for such an area
- Assess Yokum Brook for potential swimming areas that may be safe and easily accessible.

Consider design and development of a local Youth Center

- Review zoning of vacant buildings to determine if uses is allowed
- Research how a youth center can be supported, developed and managed

Organize Community Events

- Organize a volunteer Recreation Activity Organizing Committee
- Create events that will bring community together and attract interaction with visitors
- Tie events in with other activities taking place nearby i.e. with Jacob's Pillow

Establish network of trails to access village venues and natural, recreational attractions

- See Transportation Section for details

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN TOWN OF BECKET



Community Setting



Community Setting



Plantation Number Four known today as the Town of Becket is in the northern section of what is considered the Southern Berkshires. The towns of Washington and Middlefield in the North, Lee and Tyringham to the West, Otis to the South and Cheshire to the East border it. The Town of Becket is rich in history, an ever-beautiful pastoral landscape, a small town atmosphere and the arts.

Becket was one of four townships that were conveyed to the colonial government by the Stockbridge Indians in 1735. The Town of Becket was officially established and incorporated in 1765 by deed of the Royal Court of Massachusetts in the King of England's name. The first settlers and travelers to come to Becket were greeted with a craggy mountainous landscape, the cool rush of countless streams, small quiet ponds and a forest rich soil that was not very good for cultivation of agriculture. Many settlers began by harvesting the timber and farming but the shallow soils soon gave way sending many farmers west. The town has been marked by time and the land that once was harvested has returned to a prime natural state except for the now numerous houses that have been built by those seeking solace out in the woods. The town's peaceful pride can be seen in the old stones and in the rich history of its buildings like the Mullen House. Other contributors that make the town a destination is the Internationally renowned Jacobs Pillow Dance Festival and School. Each summer it entertains the public with motion and rhythm of countless performers in an enchanting setting.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN TOWN OF BECKET



Open Space and Recreation Plan



Open Space and Resource Protection

Introduction to Open Space

Updated Open Space and Recreation Element

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Open Space and Recreation Element



The Open Space element builds on the goals and objectives of the Becket's most recent Open Space Plan (1998) by focusing on a number of specific challenges and opportunities in the North Becket Village area. This element documents the existing conditions within the village as related to natural resources, recreational resources, historic and cultural resources. Based on review of the previous plan, public input and field observation this element identifies a number of goals and actions to enhance existing natural and recreational venues and to improve access to these attractions. Discussion of the proposed Mullen House Education Center and its central role in expanding environmental education and recreational opportunities is also a focal point of the Open and Recreation Element. A comprehensive collection of GIS maps documenting the Town's natural features, water resources, protected lands and many other significant ecological features are included in Section 8 titled *GIS Mapping*.

Community Development Plan 2004 Open Space and Recreation Element Town of Becket

I. Introduction and Background

In 1989 the Town of Becket produced its first Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP). An update of the Plan was completed in 1998. The plan addresses issues of resource protection, conservation of lands and historic structures and future open space and recreational opportunities within the town's boundary. This element of the Community Development Plan (CDP) is intended to build upon the goals and objectives outlined in these early plans by focusing effort and discussion specifically on the North Becket Village area. The community has identified this area as having a high level of importance and significance to the character of the Town as a whole. The North Becket Village is also viewed as an area of Town that is experiencing a significant transition and is working to maintain its traditional village character and identity. This element of the plan describes some of the important cultural, historical and natural assets in the Village area and provides recommendations for expanding recreational opportunities and safe and secure access to these opportunities.

The conversion of the historic municipally owned Mullen House for use as an environmental, cultural and visitor education center is a central component in revitalizing the North Becket Village area and in providing for a variety of informational and recreational opportunities, which are discussed here, and in other sections of this plan. In addition to the proposed Mullen House Educational Center, this element considers a number of other significant village venues for improvement, enhancement and better accessibility.

II. Need for Open Space and Recreation in Becket

The Town of Becket as a whole is relatively undeveloped; approximately 9.7% (2,952 acres of the total 30,580 acres in town) is considered developed. Of the 30,580 acres only 15% (4,689 acres) is permanently protected including 3,832 acres of forestland mostly located in October Mountain State Forest, the largest state forest in MA (*Report on Potential Buildout of Becket, Jan 2000, BRPC*). Using the buildout analysis formula that considers absolute and partial protection and building constraints approximately 45% (13,798 acres) of Becket is buildable. While it is highly unlikely that maximum buildout will occur in the near future it is important that Becket is proactive in protecting its most valued open spaces, rural character, numerous outdoor recreation opportunities, and historic districts. As identified in *Report on Potential Buildout of Becket, Jan 2000, BRPC* Becket has two historic districts, one in Becket Center District (south), the other is North Becket village Historic District.

The earliest available Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) developed in 1989 identifies the desire to “protect ponds, streams and wetlands”, “encourage the inclusion of West Branch of the Westfield River in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Program” which has happened, “improve the fringe habitat and water quality of streams”, “preserve and develop scenic vistas along town roads”, “acquire land for park and recreational use” publicize and mark access to recreational areas and establish a public awareness / education campaign.

By the time the second OSRP was complete in 1998 only a few of these goals had been realized. The 1998 OSRP identified clean water for swimming, fishing, boating and drinking as well as the natural beauty and rural character as key factors to the success of the town to serve year round residents, attract visitors and second home owners thereby adding to the town’s slow but steady growth. Perhaps Becket’s most notable natural and recreational attractions are its eight Great Ponds Center, Greenwater, Yokum, and Buckley-Dunton Reservoir have easy access while Horn, Rudd, Shaw and Ward), none of which fall into the boundaries covered in this plan, all of which are open for use by anybody and can be promoted and utilized by residents and visitors to North Becket. Although there are numerous private summer camps in the area, public opportunities for local youth in all these categories were limited, and still need to be addressed. The OSRP identifies the existence of numerous large, undivided, unprotected parcels that could be used to link other parcels to create wildlife corridors. However, it also voiced the concern of residents that continued and undirected growth could result in the loss of cherished landscapes and leads to the need to increase the number of protected open spaces and other important environments, increase and improve recreational opportunities, and how to access them more readily.

The 1998 OSRP reflects the results of a town wide questionnaire stating that the most popular pastimes in Becket were hiking, nature watching, tennis, and fishing. The only town owned properties that support these pastimes in North Becket village are Ballou park and the tennis courts which become very crowded in the summertime and the need for additional amenities is still evident to the residents who participated in the CDP planning process. A need to increase the number of maintained trails is stated in the 1998 OSRP – including one to the keystone arches and one to access the view of the ravine at Shaker Mill Brook, both of these concepts were reiterated in the most recent public forum for North Becket.

In the 1998 OSRP the diffusion of activity between North Becket and Becket Center was highlighted as contributing to the lack of a well-defined municipal/commercial center. This trend continues with the relocation of the Town Hall and Post Office to Becket Center, and the closing of the General Store in North Becket. This plan considers some ways to offset the loss of these important features.

In North Becket village the only permanently protected land is the 10 acre cemetery owned by the municipality while other municipality owned land in the area is only moderately protected, yet there are numerous sites in North Becket that are considered worth preserving for future generations including land, rivers, and historic sites. While the community's desire to develop and implement plans identifying which areas should become more accessible to more people is important, it is equally important to identify, where possible, how to protect valued sites from future development and to reestablish North Becket Village as the focal point of the Town.

III. Description of Existing Conditions

North Becket, like many villages and towns in Berkshire County, has a number of assets that fall into the category of open spaces and recreational opportunities. While these assets play a role in the vibrancy of the village, servicing residents and attracting more visitors and potential full time residents, their continued existence may be threatened if there is no official plan to protect them permanently, or commitment to maintain or improve them in the future.

To assess what is an asset, and which assets are of greater priority to protect and enhance is an essential part of this plan in order to set goals and objectives for the future. Below is a description of open space and recreational assets in North Becket village as described by the CDP Advisory Committee and the attendees of the community meeting and how they relate to open space and recreation.

Ravine at Shaker Mill Brook

The ravine at Shaker Mill Brook is a very popular scenic area amongst Becket's residents. Until recently access to view it was through private land, but the town acquired a small ½-acre parcel that affords a view of the ravine from the high banks of the Shaker Mill Brook. The Shaker Mill Brook joins the West Branch of the Westfield River, which has recently been designated as part of Westfield River Wild and Scenic.

Historic District

North Becket has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places as a National Historic District, and it is the only place in MA to have the designation of National Rural Historic District (*OSRP 1998*) A map and guide of the district is available for anyone who wants to tour the area and visit the buildings and sites. There are 42 historic sites, cemeteries, churches, homes and places of business listed in the 1985 Inventory of Historic Places recognized by the Massachusetts Historical Commission that include: North Becket Cemetery, Becket Athenaeum, Ballou Park, Veterans Park, Shaker Mill Brook Fulling Site, Silk Mill Foundation, The Old Basket Shop and Bidwell Park. Most of the buildings are privately owned, while a few are owned and maintained by the municipality.

Parks

Bidwell Park in North Becket is a 1-acre parcel recognized on the State Registry as an historic site. This narrow strip of grassy land with a few shade trees, located between Yokum Brook and Main Street, and bound to the north by the West Branch of the Westfield River, and Maple Street to the south was the only piece of land remaining after the flood of 1927 and was deeded to the town to be used always to beautify the town.

On the east side of Yokum Brook is a municipally owned parcel that was first used as a park in 1980 when the school, which is opposite to the park on Maple Street, was first being refurbished. More improvements were made in the last couple of years and the park now has a 1/7th of a mile track, a baseball backstop, physical fitness equipment and a few benches. This parcel is currently only accessible via an easement between parcels 206-86 and 87 (See appendix 2.A).

Ballou Park is a 0.4-acre memorial park that was donated to the town in 1927 after the flood. It is dedicated to the veterans of WWI and WWII with Memorial Markers and a flagpole that serves as a Vietnam War Memorial. It is located further south along Main Street from Bidwell Park.

Cemeteries

North Becket Cemetery is just less than 10 acres in size and located just within the study area boundary at the southern end of Route 8. It is part of the Historic District with the first burial dating back to 1854. Originally only 3 acres and 57 rods (MA Historical Commission), another 6 acres were added in 1956.

Fishing Spots

The most well known fishing spot in North Becket is located on Depot Brook. People who enjoy trout fishing will park at the end of Depot Street and walk the rest of the way to Depot Brook. Access to the brook beyond Depot Street is via either private property (i.e. Consolidated Railway property) which raises concerns of privacy, safety and accessibility in general. Shaker Mill Brook is also accessed for trout fishing; the busiest time of the season is spring and summer.

If the proposed hiking trails and related parking areas are pursued (see Transportation Section) these fishing spots will be more readily accessible.

Swimming Holes

Two known swimming holes are currently used primarily by local residents as they are located on private property and not generally known by the public at large. As with the fishing spots these swimming holes are currently accessible only by crossing private properties but fall within reach of the proposed new hiking trails along Shaker Mill Brook and Depot Brook (see Transportation section). The desire to make this type of recreational asset more available to more people has been expressed through public meetings.

Vacant Lots

North Becket has a number of large and small vacant lots including an unused lumberyard. In the past this site (parcel 206-89) has been harvested of its trees, which were then processed into lumber. This highly wooded area, like many in the area, was very important to the lumber industry in the past. It is unclear whether this site has 21E issues related to its previous commercial use. A site assessment would need to be performed before concluding what action could be taken in the future. The parcel is approximately 5 acres and abuts the town park and the Consolidated Railway and has potential for recreational use as well as commercial use because of its proximity to both.

Other large vacant parcels that may be considered for protection are 206-23 (48 acres) and 206-66. These are the two largest vacant parcels in North Becket, if they were subdivided and developed their loss would have a significant effect on the overall character of North Becket Village. Parcel 206-

66 has already been subdivided into single-family sized lots along Leland Road.

Vacant Buildings

As mentioned before, there are a number of publicly and privately owned vacant buildings in North Becket village. Replacing the General Store with something that can attract people into the village is important to maintain and increase the level of activity in the area. The soon to be vacated Post Office and Town Hall are both historic buildings and could be utilized to establish a recreation or youth center for the local community.

Scenic Views

Most potential views are unavailable in North Becket because of the highly forested nature of this part of town. However, upon entering North Becket from the NE corner traveling south via High Street there is an open view looking SE toward the Kushi Institute. Keeping this view open represents a pleasant break in the drive through the North village.

IV Discussion of Open Space and Recreation Challenges and Opportunities

There are four key challenges and related opportunities associated to open space and recreation in North Becket Village:

- 1) Revitalizing or converting unused or underused village spaces for open space and recreational purposes. Focusing on improving specific sites within the designated will create a cohesive, well-designed and maintained village center.
- 2) Creating easy, safe and legal access to open spaces and recreational opportunities so that people of all ages and abilities can enjoy them equally. Many recognized sites in North Becket are only accessible through private residential or commercial properties meaning that anybody using them is essentially trespassing. The unofficial trails are often difficult to traverse and not well marked.
- 3) Currently limited opportunities for family based recreation such as swimming, fishing, picnics and other passive recreation is available in North Becket. However, there are numerous opportunities to capitalize on natural resources and develop more community and tourist based activities.
- 4) Despite the existence of private youth camps in the area there are few opportunities geared specifically toward the local youth of the area, especially in the evenings.

Through the public planning process challenges for open space and recreation include the following:

Challenge: –

Consider revitalizing or converting properties that no longer serve their original intended purpose into something that serves as a community recreational facility or open space.

Lumber Yard

Parcel 206-88 was an active lumberyard, which is no longer in use. The buildings are located on approximately 5 acres of cleared land, have been neglected and are run-down, heavy equipment and dumpsters are sitting unused on the site, the site is generally unkempt and overgrown. The site abuts the municipal park to the west, and the railroad line to the north making it a good location either to become part of the park or for shipping products in or out of the location. It is close to the elementary school, which makes it somewhat of an attraction for inquisitive schoolchildren. It is unknown whether this site has contamination issues related to its previous use.

Post Office and Town Hall

The Town Hall and Post Office have recently relocated to Becket Center leaving their former buildings unoccupied and unused and detracting from the vibrant character of the Village.

Opportunities: -

Lumber Yard

During the public forum the community expressed a general concern to see this lot cleaned up and utilized in a way that would benefit the community at large. It is a large lot (over 5 acres). Three suggestions for this lot were:

- I. Community gardens
Make small lots available to locals, community and school groups to use as gardens for growing plants or produce. This can be for the pure pleasure of gardening or can be used as an educational tool.
- II. Small agricultural facility such as Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)
Create the opportunity for a small-scale farm to exist on this site and promote a commitment between the farm and the community to support each other. This will result in transferring this unused commercial site into an active operating farm, create local jobs, improve the economy of North Becket and increase the sense of community.
- III. Extend the public park by acquiring this property for the town
As mentioned in the section on parks, the community hopes to develop the opportunity to hold larger type venues in the

municipal park. By increasing the size of the park the opportunity for larger gatherings is increased. It will also help in protecting more open space from being developed.

This land is privately owned and not currently on the market for sale. It is also necessary to assess whether this land has been negatively affected by activities previously performed here. It may be possible to restore the land to complete health, or used in a reduced capacity such as growing non-edibles.

Any one of the three suggestions will result in additional and improved open space in North Becket. I and III will also result in opportunities to develop further recreational opportunities in the area, while II will add to the potential of economic growth.

Post Office and Town Hall

It was suggested that these buildings could be used in a number of ways to serve the village area and the community at large. Some suggestions included:

- A local History Museum to provide a permanent place for the storage and exhibition of historical documents and artifacts
- Community Center
- Youth Center
- Various appropriately scaled Commercial applications

Challenge:- Improve appearance, safety, and accessibility of existing and new open spaces and recreational facilities and extend opportunities for family based recreation, particularly swimming, fishing and passive recreation.

Opportunities:

Mullen House Education Center

This house is in the Historic District and is located on the corner of Brooker Hill Road and Washington Street facing Main Street. This was originally the Congregational Parsonage designed, built and owned by the architect Lansford White and more recently known as the Mullen House. It was donated to the Town of Becket and it is intended that it will become the education center for Becket, and home to several non-profit groups engaged in educational vocations. The organization will work with these groups to create and implement exhibits and programs to illuminate environmental, historical and cultural themes connected to the regions in and around Becket. It also intends to be the Visitor Center for the Town of Becket and aid in the revitalization of North Becket's Historic District.

Ultimately the Mullen House will draw residents and visitors together in the center of North Village linking them to educational, vocational and recreational activities in the area.

Ballou Public Park

The municipal park is currently only accessible by foot or bicycle via an easement that runs between parcels 206-86 and 87. The community discussed the opportunity to increase access to the park by building a bridge over Yokum Brook where there is also more parking available. Another suggestion that the bridge be covered gained much public approval as it would add to the general charm of the village and become another attraction to visitors.

The park is used extensively by the nearby elementary school children, local residents, and visitors. Residents at the charette believe it could be better utilized for people of all ages and abilities, by individuals and families if picnic tables, more benches, and facilities for cook outs, including fire pits etc. were added.

Expanding the park by acquiring part or all of the neighboring property (parcel 206-88, the lumber yard) could also encourage greater use for larger gatherings and may encourage the development of regular concerts being staged in the park both for neighbors and visitors. This type of activity could be further encouraged by building an amphitheatre for concerts and gatherings.

All of the above ideas were discussed at the public charette and if implemented would improve the likelihood of community interaction/participation and recreational opportunities.

Concerns with these ideas are mostly related to raising the funds and getting appropriate public support to buy land or build the suggested structures. Another comment against the idea of going to the expense of building a gazebo or amphitheatre here is there is already an area for bands and concerts established near the Fire Station.

Yokum Brook

Access part of Yokum Brook for swimming – suggested area was near the school, below the dam that would create safe, public swimming area for locals and visitors, but it was also acknowledged that the dam is destined to be removed that would hinder this idea.

Clean up the brook and its banks especially in the area to be used for swimming and the areas immediately within the town that will be viewed by residents and visitors on a regular basis.

Shaker Mill Brook

The natural whirlpool behind the Mullen House has been used by locals for many years and it was suggested at the public forum that this be made more accessible to all. However it is located on private property and an easement would be required for official public use. There was also some disagreement to which spots should remain private to the locals rather than public to all. People expressed their concern that making it public would also require there to be a maintenance plan so that it was kept clean and safe.

Accessing the view of the ravine has been made easier by the acquisition by the town of a small parcel adjacent to Shaker Mill Brook but in the recent past access to that parcel via Brooker Hill Road has become a concern due to some severe structural problems (parts of its northern edge have slid down the hillside rendering what was once a two way road into a one way road. Also, the access point is so steep that it is not accessible to everybody. Access is limited because the area of public land is small and abuts private property requiring an easement to allow legal access to the public to go further along the Brook or back down to the Mullen House.

Organize Family Community Events

In the past the community has held events that encourage community interaction, the general consensus at the charette was to reintroduce the Fishing Derby with age categories ranging from young children to adults in order to bring the community together and encourage more family activities.

Existing Tennis Court

The town tennis courts are adjacent to the school on Maple Street and are open for public use. Tennis players would like the courts to be more accessible / usable / vandal proof and have an organized way to schedule games.

Pill's Pond

This privately owned pond is easily accessible from a nearby public road and could be used as a skating pond in winter time. Access to skating could be directly from the road avoiding issues with crossing private property.

Challenge:-

Increase opportunities for youth oriented recreation

Opportunity:-

Youth Center

There are not enough activities geared toward the youth of the area, especially in the evenings and the creation of a youth center in one of the now, or soon to be vacant buildings in the town center i.e. the old Town Hall, General Store or Post Office could address this concern.

General

Increase and improve maintenance of trails, walks, parks and swimming holes.

General maintenance of all structures such as removing abandoned vehicles from pleasant street and painting existing and new bridges regularly.

Challenge:-

Protect revered open spaces, views and places of interest while making them available to the public to enjoy.

Opportunity:-

Large Vacant Lots

Investigate possibilities of either protecting them from being developed OR; Design guidelines on how they can be developed without spoiling the general character of the village.

Mullen House Educational Center and Becket Land Trust

Utilize the expertise of these two groups

- I. to identify and procure easements and protection for important open spaces
- II. promote education and make available information on the importance of preserving open spaces and sensitive environments

Design, develop and maintain trails

See Transportation: Connect these new trails with existing trails, scenic views, and recreational opportunities where possible.

Public Participation

In late 2003 the Board of Selectmen in Becket approved the establishment of the Mullen House Task Force. The group is represented by local citizens who reflect the differing views and opinions of the community at large and are involved with the ongoing task of utilizing the donated Mullen House, in the center of town, in a way that benefits the whole town. The direction the task force took to turn the Mullen House into a center for education and the environment linked closely to the goals of the Community Development Plan (CDP) and as a result the same group became the CDP Advisory Committee in June of 2003 to actively continue and complete the plan.

The Task Force met regularly, usually once every two weeks, to discuss, develop, and promote the plan. As the CDP Advisory Committee they have held approximately 20 meetings since that time. They also met and outlined ideas with BRPC that could be used to initiate discussion at the public meeting. The CDP Advisory Committee meetings culminated in a public charette open to all key stakeholders and interested village residents on March 8th 2004. Thirty to thirty-five people, other than CDP Advisory Committee members, attended the meeting. The meeting included an outline of the goals of the Mullen House Task Force/ Advisory Committee by Ken Smith, a presentation of the Mullen House project by architect Jeffrey Scott Penn, an overview of CDP requirements and project outline by Bryan Boeskin (BRPC), and concluded with a public discussion and sharing of ideas and responses facilitated by Sari Hoy (BRPC).

Visioning Process

The CDP Advisory Board met with BRPC to outline ideas that may be used as a guiding tool in the public charette. These ideas were used only to initiate or stimulate discussion at the March 8th 2004 meeting. Promotion of the charette in local newspapers and the issuing of fliers were made in advance of the meeting. Explanation of the project to date, the people and parties involved to date were presented at the charette. The floor was opened for discussion and the public very quickly brought forth valid ideas and concerns for numerous possibilities related to open space and recreation, economic development, and transportation aspects of the CDP.

As the discussion evolved notes were taken. Ample time was given to discuss each CDP element before moving onto the next subject. At the end of the evening all ideas were presented by pinning the work sheets to the walls of the meeting room, each resident was given three stickers and asked to apply the stickers to the top three ideas based on their importance of priority.

Recommended Action Plan

Goal: Restore or revitalize properties that do not fit in with the general character of the village, or have become rundown or contaminated over the years, in order to have a cohesive appearance in the village.

Recommended Actions

Consider acquiring and converting former lumberyard for community use.

- Contact property owner to discuss possibility of selling or leasing the land for other uses
- Seek funding to have site assessed for contamination
- Determine potential use of site based on contamination results and/or clean up proposals
- Consider acquiring lot for Community Gardens, Community Supported Agriculture or to extend the Municipal Park
- Identify potential buyers/renters of site

Move forward on final design and construction of the Mullen House Education Center

- See Economic Development Element for details.

Goal: Improve appearance, safety, and accessibility of existing and new open spaces and recreational facilities and extend opportunities for family based recreation, particularly swimming, fishing and passive recreation.

Recommended Action

Make improvements to municipal park facilities

- Research possibilities for building a covered bridge (*See Sheffield covered bridge project*). Raising funds and attracting the help of local builders/carpenters who would volunteer their services as a match to any grants that may be available
- Research the likelihood of the neighboring property being available to buy and how the town would raise funds to purchase it
- Assess support for a concert staging area and who would organize the concerts, and the cost for building it. Research raising money for such an area
- Assess Yokum Brook for potential swimming areas that may be safe and easily accessible.

Consider design and development of a local Youth Center

- Check that zoning of vacant buildings is conducive to supporting a youth center
- Research how a youth center can be supported financially and who would run it and hold classes etc

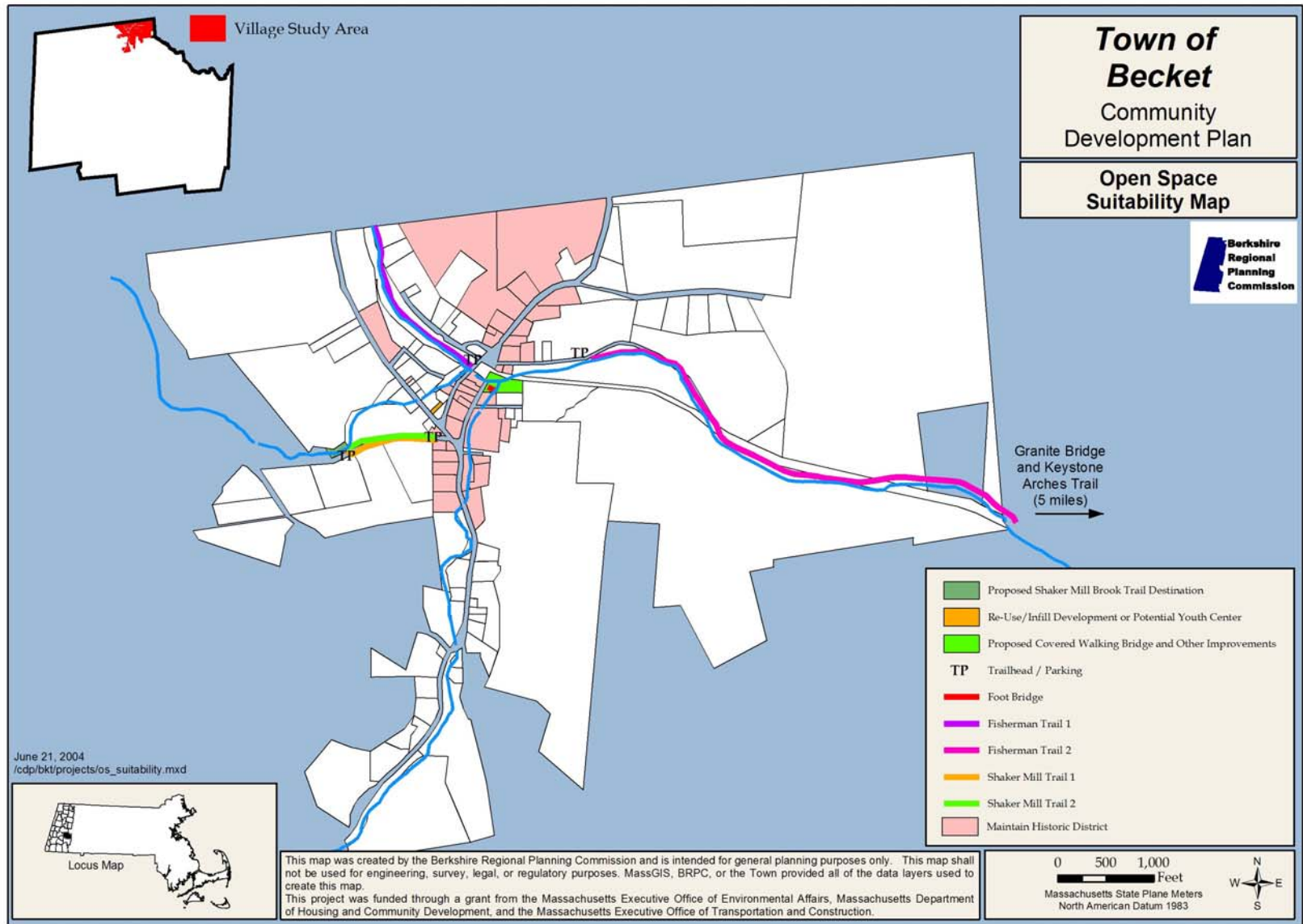
Organize Community Events

- Organize a volunteer Recreation Activity Organizing Committee

- Create events that will bring community together and attract interaction with visitors
- Tie events in with other activities taking place nearby i.e. with Jacob's Pillow

Establish network of trails to access village venues and natural, recreational attractions

- See Transportation Section for details



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN TOWN OF BECKET



Housing



Housing

Introduction to Housing
Housing Element

5

5-1
5-2

Housing Element



The Housing element for the Town of Becket includes a detailed inventory of housing supply, anticipated demand and analysis of affordability. This element provides documentation and analysis of a wide range of housing data and provides a number of recommended local actions to promote affordable housing opportunities in the Town of Becket. The data presented includes discussion of local and regional demographics, economic issues such as assessed values, market values and property taxes, housing tenure, housing age and condition, vacancy rates, rental housing availability, rental costs and other relevant information. A market based affordability gap analysis is also provided.

Community Development Plan Housing Element *for* Becket, Massachusetts

Housing Element

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I. Housing Supply Inventory

Housing Profile

The Town of Becket currently has 1,607 residential housing units that are primarily single-family homes (96.5%) and seasonal dwellings (57%). [See Tables H-1 and H-2] The percentage of seasonal homes in Becket is much higher than the Berkshire County average of 9%, and is higher than the 28% average for southern Berkshire County, which traditionally hosts the majority of seasonal residents ⁽²⁾. There are 614 year-round owner-occupied units comprising 38% of the stock, while only 69 (4%) of the units are year-round rental units.

The total number of housing units counted in the national census appears to have decreased slightly from Census 1990 to 2000 from 1,499 to 1,451⁽³⁾. There were increases in year-round owner-occupied housing from 447 to 612, and a decrease in seasonal units (from 857 to 712). [Table H-3]. The vacancy rate for all types of housing is 3%, a third of the 1990 rate of 9%⁽³⁾.

The total land area of Becket consists of 30,581 acres. Approximately 2,952 acres, or 9.7% of the total area of town is considered developed ⁽⁴⁾. Approximately 4,689 acres or 15% of the total area of the Town is in permanently protected open space, while another 7,534 acres, or 24% of town land is considered un-developable due to physical constraints exclusive of protected open space. ⁽⁴⁾ Approximately 13,798 acres, or 45% of the total area of the Town is potentially developable land. ⁽⁴⁾

Most of the residential development in Becket is concentrated in three village centers and in two large-scale subdivisions. North Becket, Becket Center and West Becket are the town's village centers; Sherwood Forest and Sherwood Greens are the two subdivisions located around Robin Hood Lake and Longbow Lake, respectively. The whole area of the Town constitutes a single, residential/agricultural zoning district which has a minimum lot size of two acres for single-family dwellings and three acres for two-family dwellings. Many homes in Sherwood Forest pre-date this by-law and are at much higher densities on lots of 80' by 100'. Therefore, new development on these lots in their current configuration is not viable. Other residential development is mostly single-family homes on lots greater than two acres along existing roadways. Discussion with local realtors indicates that a significant amount of the prime developable land is already subdivided and has been sold off to individual owners, i.e. the realtors were not aware of any very large tracts of land that are currently being marketed by large-scale investors/developers. However this does not appear to be completely consistent with a review of recent parcel maps of the Town.

Table H-1: Becket's Current Housing Stock:		
Housing Type	Number	% of Total
Single Family Homes	1,552	96.5%
Mobile Homes	49	3.0%
Multi-Family Units	6	0.5%
Condominiums	0	0%
Other Homes	0	0%
Total Housing Stock:	1,607	100%

Table H-2: Becket's Housing Occupancy		
Occupancy Type	Number	% of Total
Seasonal	924	57%
Owner-Occupied	614	38%
Rental	69	4%
Vacancy Rate ⁽³⁾		3%

Source: Becket Town Assessors, 2001

Becket's Building Inspector issues approximately 50 building code violations a year. The majority of these violations are for non-permitted home improvements such as construction of decks, sheds, roofs, and other various projects. A small, but persistent number of safety violations are issued yearly for houses that are unstable and are potential safety hazards⁽⁵⁾.

The Becket Board of Health averages two to three violations annually, and estimates that 5% of the Town's homes have some form of health violation. A number of homes in obvious disrepair were inventoried by the Building Inspector and Board of Health in 2000, and are in the process of being removed or repaired. The largest health problem in Town is failed septic systems. Approximately 25% of all Title 5 septic inspections have required minor repair or replacement.

An average of 100-150 building permits are issued annually for rehabilitation⁽⁵⁾. Some of the most common types of permitted repair projects include electrical upgrades, installation or upgrades to heating systems and wood stoves, roof replacements, replacement and weatherproofing of foundations (frost walls), insulation, plumbing repairs, and septic repairs. These permits are consistent with two trends. First, as described above, the housing stock is aging and requires rehabilitation and system upgrades. Second, anecdotal evidence suggests that some seasonal housing is being used as year-round housing; converted piecemeal as funds allow in order to better handle the winter weather. Families who cannot afford higher priced local homes will rent or purchase lower end, more affordable seasonal housing and try to convert it to permanent housing. The permitted projects described above are consistent with this activity.

Housing costs have increased significantly since 1995. From 1994 to 2001, the annual median sales price for single-family houses sold in Becket increased by almost 63% from \$75,750 to \$120,500.⁽⁶⁾ In addition, average sales prices have surpassed average assessed values in 1998 [see Table H-4], demonstrating that market values are raising the current valuations of the housing stock. Local Realtors and the Town Assessors office indicate that the housing market has continued to be strong in 2002.



The market strength is reflected in building permit data as well. From 1995 to 2000, 89 building permits for new residential construction were issued in Becket⁽⁸⁾. All new-unit residential construction was for single-family housing and had a combined average assessed value of \$203,700 per unit^(8;5). Approximately 50-60% of the housing built since 1995 has been for high-end seasonal homes and the rest has been for moderately priced primary residences.⁽⁵⁾ This trend is expected to continue.

Table H-3: Becket's Occupancy Change 1990-2000			
Occupancy Type	Number 1990	Number 2000	% Change 1990-2000
Seasonal	857	712	-17%
Owner-Occupied	447	612	+37%
Rental	67	80	-30%
Vacant	128	47	-63%
Total Census Stock	1499	1451	-3%
<i>Source: US Census Bureau, 1990 & 2000 Census</i>			

Rents have also increased significantly in the past ten years. While average Berkshire County rents increased by 27% from \$365 to \$504, the median contract rent in Becket increased 33% from \$425 to \$704 ⁽³⁾. Fair market rent for Becket is \$488 for a one bedroom unit and \$576 for a two-bedroom unit. ⁽⁹⁾

Although tax rates in Becket have increased over the past 12 years, the rates have remained lower than other communities in both the Berkshires and other parts of the Commonwealth. The tax rate for all residential property in Becket in 2002 is \$11.42 for every \$1,000 assessed value. This is up slightly from \$11.28 in 2001 but lower than the average rate of \$12.67 for Berkshire County towns. The average single family bill in 2002 was \$1,253, ranking the Town 324 of the 344 Massachusetts towns reporting tax rates.

As of April, 2002, the Town of Becket does not have any units that qualify as affordable under M.G.L. Chapter 40B. According to the Massachusetts Comprehensive Permit law (commonly referred to as Chapter 40b), if a community, such as Becket, in which less than 10% of its total year-round housing stock is subsidized low- or moderate-income housing, denies a comprehensive permit, or imposes conditions that make the project un-economic, the developer/proponent may appeal to the state Housing Appeals Committee (HAC) for review of the local action. In the majority of cases where the Town does not meet the 10% goal, the HAC rules in favor of the developer/proponent. Based on current housing stock the Town's C.40B requirement is 68 units. Detailed information on how Chapter 40b affects local governments is found in the 2002 edition of Berkshire Regional Planning Tools publication, available through the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. Although the Town does not have a local housing authority, access to some affordable housing is provided by Berkshire Housing Services, a nonprofit administering a Section 8 program - and other housing programs - that covers Becket.

Becket Housing Inventory Summary

- Primarily single family homes
- Over half of the homes are seasonal
- Almost no rental housing and no affordable housing as defined by MGL C.40B
- Significant increases in home sale prices
- Low vacancy rates
- New construction tends to be of higher end seasonal single family homes
- Stock is aging; rehabilitation needed including septic systems
- Tax rates remain low in comparison with County and State

Table H-4: Annual Single Family Home (SFH) Market Statistics for Becket						
	Current Value	Recent Sales Data			New Construction	
Year	Average	Total Number	Median SFH	Average	Total New	AVG Value of

	Assessed Value of Current Housing Stock ⁷	of SFH Sales ⁶	Sales Price ⁶	SFH Sales Price ⁶	SFHs Built ⁸	New SFHs Built ⁸
1994	\$90,584	75	\$75,750	\$76,737	-	-
1995	\$90,925	81	\$70,950	\$73,757	14	\$160,592
1996	\$92,730	71	\$86,500	\$91,262	18	\$215,631
1997	\$93,889	84	\$93,000	\$92,872	12	\$175,583
1998	\$97,364	88	\$89,000	\$103,873	16	\$288,287
1999	\$98,163	113	\$95,000	\$113,321	10	\$175,300
2000	\$99,776	54	\$107,750	\$145,070	6	\$108,500
2001	\$106,944	57	\$120,500	\$139,709	13 ⁵	\$221,192 ⁵

II. Assessment of Housing Demand

Demographic Profile

Population increases in Becket are reflective of the increase in housing units described above. The population of Becket has increased by an average of 24% every decade since 1970. During the same time period, the population of Berkshire County overall has steadily decreased by an average of approximately 3% every decade. [See Table H-5]. The total number of households in Becket has increased from 514 in 1990 to 692 in 2000 ³. Household size, however, has decreased from 2.9 persons per household to 2.5 persons ³. This data reflects the increase in housing units described above as well as possibly a change in the profile of households living in Becket. Over 50% of year round Becket residents had moved to Town, or within Town, since 1990 ³.

The population increase has not been equal across the age spectrum. From 1990 to 2000, the Town saw a 36% increase in residents 65 years of age and older ³. This is higher than the county-wide increase of 30% but less than the 50% increase statewide. Individuals 55 years or older now represent 25% of the total population of the Town, raising the median age to 40.8 ³.

In contrast, the total number of children and youth ages 24 and younger declined slightly with the number of children under age 5 decreasing by 29%. There has been some decline in births to local residents during this period but, this factor alone does not account for the decrease. This change could suggest that either families with small children are leaving Town, not moving into Town or both.



The Town's school expenditure data is consistent with the population data. The number of pupils annually since 1995 has increased only negligibly. In 2000, the cost per pupil was \$7,112 below the county average of \$7,831. In the same year, 44% of Town operating expenditures, or "General Fund" expenditures were used for education, below the county average of 54%.

The median household income in Becket has increased from \$31,435 in 1990 to \$46,806 in 2000. This increase of 49% [See Table H-8] is higher than either the 28% increase in Berkshire County or the statewide increase of 37%. The average household income for the Town increased by 46% from \$37,076 in 1990 to \$54,237 in 2000. Regionally, the average household income for Berkshire County increased by 37%, while the state-wide increase was 51% during this period.

Though seemingly dramatic, the 46% increase in household income over the last 10 years in Becket has not been able to match the 63% increase in average housing prices that has occurred in the last 5 years alone, and suggests that those with more moderately increasing incomes are being priced out of the housing market.

Table H-5: Historical Population Counts		
	Becket, MA	Berkshire County
1970	1,017	149,402
1980	1,339	145,110
1990	1,481	139,352
2000	1,755	134,953
<i>Source: US Census Bureau</i>		

Comparing the income distributions in Becket from 1990 and 2000, an increase in the number of households at both the high and low ends of the economic spectrum points out an increasing separation of wealth in Town. [See Table H-7] From 1990 to 2000, Becket experienced a 3% increase in the number of poorest households, a 1% increase in those with the highest incomes, and a 4% decrease in middle and moderate-income households.

Summary Becket Demographic Profile

- Increase in overall population
- Decrease in household size
- Increase in older households
- No increase in children and youth
- Significant increase in median household income
- No significant change in income distribution
- 50% of year round residents have moved into their current unit in the last 10 years

Table H-7: Becket's Household Income Distribution 1990 & 2000

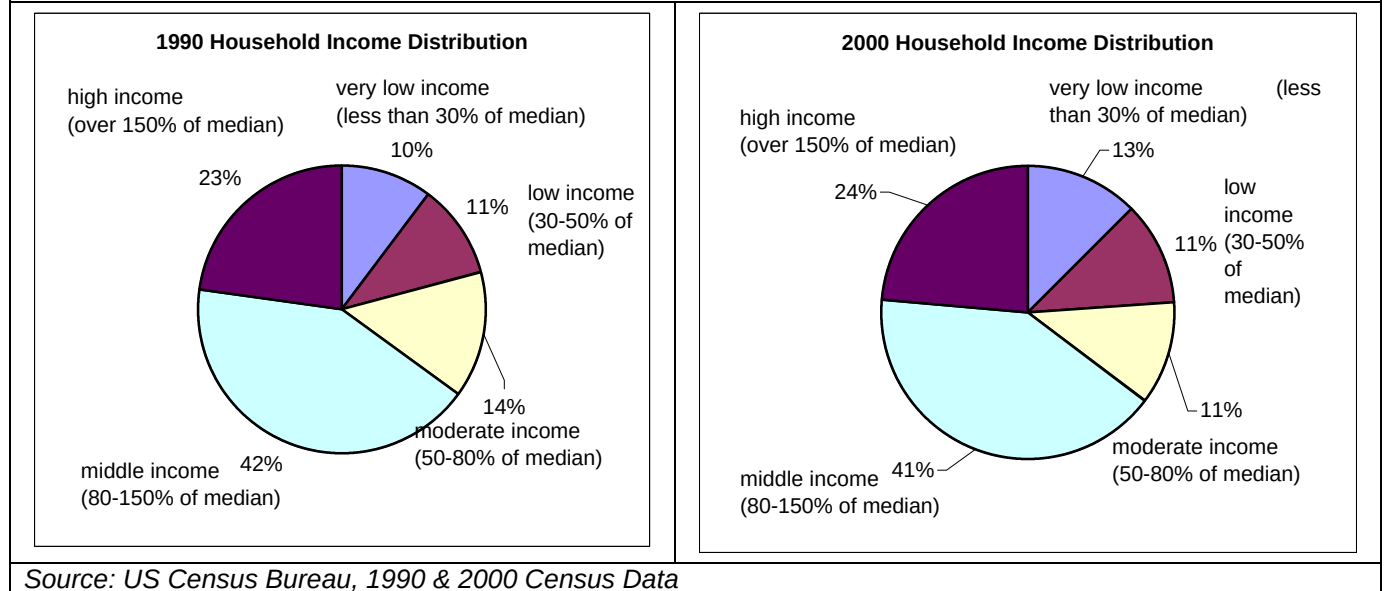


Table H-8: 1990 & 2000 Median Household Income Statistics 1990 & 2000

	Becket, MA	Berkshire County	Massachusetts
Median Household Income - Census 1990	\$31,435	\$30,470	\$36,952
Median Household Income - Census 2000	\$46,806	\$39,047	\$50,502
% change 1990-2000	+49%	+28%	+37%

Housing Needs/Demands

Demand for Rental Housing

Given the small stock of rental housing in Becket, it is difficult to get a true sense of the demand for year round rental housing. Berkshire Housing Services (BHS) – the administrator of the regional Section 8 program - reports that there are two (2) households from Becket on the Section 8 waiting list and three (3) households leased in Becket using Section 8 vouchers. This means that these households are seeking rental housing, have incomes below 80% of median and have some type of significant housing need such as being homeless or paying more than 50% of their income for rent.

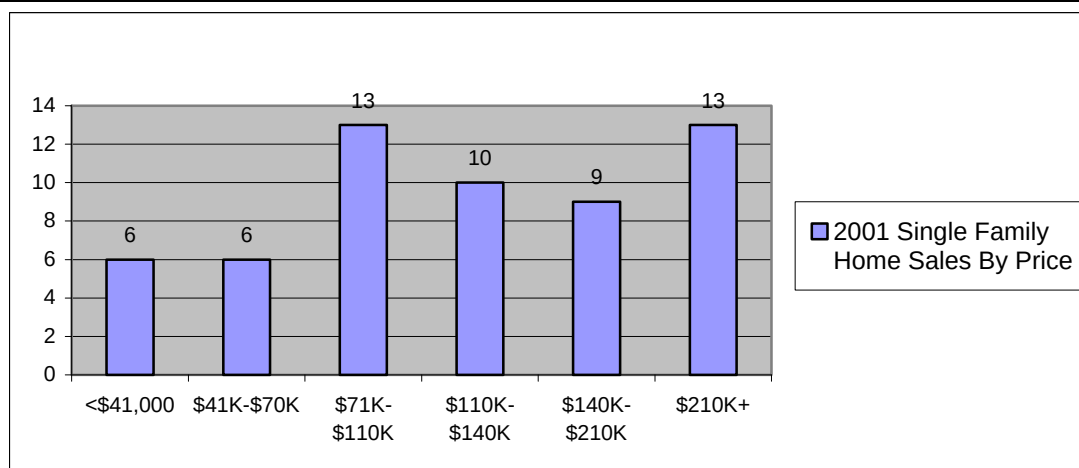
A survey recently conducted in 2002 by the Town with the assistance of BHS specifically measured the need for rental housing, and found that such a need existed among town resident. Of the 473 surveys returned (33% return rate), 292 or 62% indicated they believed there was a need for rental housing. Becket does not currently have any rental housing available for seniors or people with disabilities, but the survey results show strong evidence that there is moderate local demand for such rental housing. Thirty-nine percent (184 surveys) indicated a need for elderly housing, Thirty percent (142 surveys) indicated a need for housing for people with disabilities, and twenty-four percent (113 surveys) indicated a need for family housing.

In Becket, over 30% of Town renters are rent-burdened.³ Rent-burdened renters are those paying 35% or more of their income for rent. There is some demand for seasonal rental units but this is largely accommodated by second home owners who choose to rent their homes for the season.

Demand for Homeownership

A comparison of 2001 home sales figures with 2000 Census household economic data found the real estate sales to be consistent with household income distribution (see Appendix H-A: Affordability Gap Analysis). A household in Becket with the median income could afford to purchase the median priced home. Superficially, the data also suggest that even lower income households could identify properties affordable to them on the market. However, discussions with local realtors and organizations suggest that households with incomes of 50% of median and below cannot realistically secure habitable units.

Table H-8: 2001 Single Family Home Sales By Price



Source: Warren Information Services, 2001 Sales Data

Demand for Homeownership (Continued)

First, while it appears that there were properties sold in 2001 that were affordable to lower income residents, there is no evidence that these households actually purchased these properties. These properties could have been purchased by higher income residents with plans to rehabilitate or by nonresidents as seasonal housing. In either case, the few properties theoretically available to these households may never reach them. Furthermore, households with 50% or less of median income are less likely to have credit and savings profiles making them eligible for homeownership opportunities. Finally, even if these households are able to afford the low-end properties, it is not clear they are purchasing habitable properties. These are likely to be seasonal units or units in poor condition, both requiring rehabilitation which these households do not have the financial means to provide.

There is clearly continued demand for higher priced seasonal housing. The sales data [Table H-8] show this continued demand. A local Realtor indicated that this component of the market is currently very strong.

Demand for Rehabilitation Assistance

As described above, septic system replacement and repair is a significant need in Becket. The Town participates in MassHousing's Homeowner Septic Repair Loan Program. Prior to this program, the Town offered a local betterment program, which made six betterment loans totaling over \$55,000. The local program was suspended due to increased flexibility for the new MassHousing program. The MassHousing program offers reduced interest rate loans of \$1,000 - \$25,000 to cover costs associated with the upgrade of a failed sewage disposal system within the meaning of Title 5. Homeowners may qualify for 0%, 3% or 5% interest rates based on household income. Repairs are for owner-occupied primary-residences only, not for second homes. In the last five fiscal years, a total of eight loans and \$101,500 of Septic Repair Funds has been given to qualified homeowners in Becket.

Berkshire Housing Development Corporation (BHDC) recently secured a \$400,000 CDBG grant to provide housing rehabilitation loans of up to \$20,000 per unit to income eligible residents in Becket. Loan applications were solicited in October 2001 and 16 applicants are in the final stage of approval for the loans. The loans can be used for a wide range of rehabilitation projects. Most of the homes that are being rehabilitated are structures that were built about 25-30 years ago and were originally designed for use as seasonal domiciles. Many of these dwellings are now being used as year-round housing, but often the typical features of a year-round unit are lacking. Some of the most common types of repair projects that are seeking loan funding in Becket include: remedy of code violations, electrical upgrades, installation or upgrades to heating systems, roof replacements, replacement and weatherproofing of foundations (frost walls), insulation, plumbing repairs, septic repairs. In some cases, homes do not meet basic housing quality standards for occupancy; three children, for example, may be sharing a room that is dimensionally adequate for a single occupant. In these cases, the loan funds may be used to construct a room addition or enlargement. As a result of the interest in this program, the Town of Becket recently agreed to act as the lead applicant for a second CDBG rehabilitation grant application.

Summary Becket Housing Demand

- Need for affordable rental housing for elders, families and people with disabilities
- Households with median income can afford to purchase in Becket
- Households with incomes below 50% of median cannot afford to purchase in Becket
- Continued need for rehabilitation programs including septic repair

III. Implications of the Data for Becket – Gap Analysis

The data suggests that the community is changing. Population and year round housing units has increased. The population has a higher median income and age. Housing prices have increased more rapidly than the county as a whole. The number of seasonal units has held steady or increased. Fifty percent (50%) of year round residents have moved into their current unit in the last 10 years or less.⁽³⁾ The housing and demographic data raise a number of important issues for consideration by the community.

- **From a fiscal perspective, the abundance of seasonal housing has positive aspects for the community.** From a purely fiscal perspective seasonal housing is a big bonus for the Town. These property owners pay taxes but do not increase the need for expensive services such as schools. Further, these properties tend to have higher values, increasing the value of surrounding properties and raising the Town's assessed values overall.
- **The increase in value and revenue created by the values of the seasonal homes has a downside.** The more expensive the housing is, the less it will be affordable to those local residents whose incomes are less than median (see jobs discussion below). To the extent that housing costs keep younger families with lower incomes out of the community, Becket will continue to see an increase in the median age of residents. A community of elders has very different needs and interests than a community that includes a larger number of families with young children.

Further, the abundance of seasonal housing may impact the “character” of the community. While it is not clear whether it is directly related, 50% of households moved into their current unit within the last ten years.⁽³⁾ New households may have a different demographics, different needs and values than current residents. Other Berkshire County communities, for example, are struggling with issues such as volunteer recruitment for the Fire Department. Demographic changes in Becket may bring similar types of issues.

- **Local jobs cannot support local housing prices.** The typical home sold in Becket in 2000 was \$107,750⁽⁶⁾. According to local lenders, this home is not attainable unless the household has an income of approximately \$40,000. The typical worker employed within the town of Becket earned a salary of \$22,181 in 2000⁽³⁾. Therefore, the typical home in Becket is only affordable to the typical locally employed worker if 2 or more household members are able to work full-time. This makes it difficult for families with young children who may have a parent working only part-time or not at all to afford to purchase in Becket. It is not surprising then that most residents do not work locally, and the average commuting time to work is 31 minutes⁽³⁾.
- **Local housing may not be able to support local jobs.** As described in a study conducted for seven South Berkshire towns, “Housing units that are affordable in relation to the subregional wage structure are critical because without them”, the community’s “ability to keep and attract employers” remains constrained. As described in the economic development component of this plan, Becket’s employment base has grown in the last ten years. Average wages in town, however, have not kept pace with average housing costs. From 1995-2000, average wages rose 26.5% from \$17,531 to \$22,181⁽¹⁰⁾, while average single family home sales prices rose a dramatic 96.6%, from \$73,757 to \$145,070⁽⁶⁾. To the extent this continues to occur in both Becket and surrounding communities, employers located in Becket

will find it increasingly difficult to identify workers locally; without workers at these necessary wage rates, these employers may be forced to move.

There are steps the community can take to ensure that the community maintains some of its integrity including diversity in age, family type and income level.

IV. Recommended Actions

The following actions are recommended in order to meet the housing needs of Becket residents.

Recommendation #1 Develop local capacity to address housing needs

In order to pursue residential development, the community would benefit from some type of formalized local organization that may both add to and benefit from the efforts conducted by housing organizations working regionally. A local group or committee, for example, needs to be involved in decision-making regarding housing development: where does it take place, who is an appropriate developer for Town-owned property, what type of housing should be developed and who should it serve. Such a group should determine how these questions are answered within the town, and how the town may benefit from and contribute to efforts being conducted in the surrounding region.

A local group dedicated to housing could take the form of a Town Committee, Housing Partnership, Housing Trust or other organizational structure. Appendix H-C includes information about formation of a Local Housing Partnership; the issues discussed are relevant for the formation of any type of local housing organization.

- Determine what type of local organization is most appropriate for Becket.
- Establish such local housing organization.
- Newly established housing committee should work with the Town Administrator and Selectboard to:
 - ⇒ Pursue rental housing development as described below.
 - ⇒ Conduct a survey of local residents and employers regarding need for affordable homeownership opportunities
 - ⇒ Work with the Town to identify state and municipally owned land including tax title properties appropriate for development
 - ⇒ Continue to develop working relationships with regional and sub-regional Housing Development Agencies/Organizations -, e.g. BHDC, Community Development Corporations, Construct Inc. etc...

Recommendation #2 Review Local Zoning

While the Town's zoning by-law has some components friendly to residential development, a review and update may find areas for improvement. Currently, the entire Town of Becket is comprised of one zoning district, the Residential/Agricultural district. The zoning by-laws are designed mostly for single-family residential development. Minimum lot size is two acres for single family and three acres for two-family. Two-family and multi-family development requires a special permit from the Planning Board. The Town has Flexible Residential Development by-laws that allow for increased density residential development such as cluster developments through the special permit process. Possible actions include:

- ⇒ Review Land Suitability Maps and local parcel maps to determine if current zoning accurately reflects existing conditions and current Community Values with regard to housing
- ⇒ Review sections of Zoning by-laws related to housing, particularly section 6.5 regarding Flexible Residential Developments and consider how these by-laws may be modified to be more conducive to the production of affordable housing.
- ⇒ If a local affordable housing committee of some type is created, this group should work closely with the Planning Board to develop appropriate zoning strategies based on the results of the items noted above.

Recommendation #3 Continuation of rehabilitation programs

The data indicates an on-going need for rehabilitation programs including programs to address septic failures as well as general rehabilitation needs. Programs currently available have been well subscribed. Continuation of affordable rehabilitation programs will assist low and moderate income households including elders to maintain their properties in better repair.

- Continue to make local residents aware of MassHousing's Septic Repair Loan Program.
- Continue to work with BHCD to apply for CDBG funds for rehabilitation grants and loans.
- Pursue new rehabilitation funds which may become available.
- Often elders, who may most need assistance with rehabilitation, are reluctant to participate in loan programs – even deferred payment loan programs. Whatever type of housing committee is developed should work with the Council on Aging to determine the need for grant programs and/or technical assistance for elder households. If such need is identified, the committee and COA should identify sources of grant funds, such as foundation funding to provide such grants.

Recommendation #4 Pursue development of affordable rental housing

Becket has a negligible amount of rental housing and no MGL C.40 B housing as of April, 2002. A significant portion of year round residents surveyed responded that there is a need for affordable rental housing in Becket. Development of affordable rental housing will also assist the Town in meeting its MGL C40 B requirement and help insulate the community from outside interference in residential development. In order to pursue rental housing development, the Town should consider the following:

- Establish local organization such as a Housing Committee, Partnership or Trust to ensure local voice in decision-making. See Recommendation # 1 above.
- Continue to work with BHCD or with another local agency such as Lee CDC or CDC of Southern Berkshires or Construct to develop mixed-use rental housing. Working with nonprofit partners will assist the community in securing the grant resources needed to make the development affordable at no cost to the Town.
- Identify “no cost” local resources that can make the project work such as state- or Town-owned land that can be used for a rental development. For example, the Town has been very aggressive over the last five years in foreclosing on tax title and derelict properties. These properties are mainly very small lots that are not suitable for development as housing, mainly because they are not large enough to accommodate septic systems. The Town collects tax title lots and resells them if three abutting lots are merged, or if an abutter is interested in purchasing them. The properties are largely 80 by 100 foot parcels in Sherwood Forest, however some larger lots in Sherwood Greens were two to five acres, which were purchased

by people interested in building second homes. In total, over 200 such lots have been taken by the Town and 20 new developable lots have been created. The Town currently owns over 100 of these lots and plans to continue this activity as needed. While the goal of this effort is to clear the Town books of the tax title, the land does present an opportunity for the Town to write down the cost of housing development for local residents.

- Work with nonprofit developer to identify grants and low-interest or deferred payment loans for rental development. Possible sources include:
 - ⇒ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Programs: Section 202 Elderly Housing Program, Section 811 Housing for Persons with Disabilities
 - ⇒ U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Housing Service Program
 - ⇒ Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development Programs: Affordable Housing Trust Fund (with MassHousing), HOME, Housing Stabilization Fund, Housing Development Support Program, Local Initiative Program and Section 8 Housing Voucher Program.
 - ⇒ Massachusetts Housing Partnership loan programs
 - ⇒ Federal Home Loan Bank's Affordable Housing Program

Recommendation #5 Pursue development of affordable homeownership options

There are limited year round properties affordable to moderate income households and which are not in significant need of rehabilitation. Development of affordable homeownership opportunities will help maintain a population of families with younger children in the community. Development of affordable homeownership units will also help the community meet its MGL C.40 B requirements.

- Ensure local banks continue to participate in MassHousing's lending programs. In the last 5 years, Becket residents have received 6 loans through MassHousing's First Time Homebuyers Program. These households income cannot exceed \$66,000 for a family of two and \$75,900 for a family of three or more. Cost limits are \$277,100 for new construction and \$198,400 for existing single family properties. The six loans made in Becket total only \$438,535, suggesting these households purchased more moderately priced homes.
- Conduct a survey to identify need for affordable homeownership, similar to rental survey conducted recently by the Town. The survey should be a task of the Town's new housing committee (see Recommendation #1 above).
- If a need is identified, pursue development in a manner similar to that described for development of rental housing.
- Consider other low-cost models such as working with Habitat with Humanity or pursuing development with the local vocational school programs.

Recommendation #6 Consider the adoption of the Community Preservation Act to finance future affordable homeownership options in Becket

The Community Preservation Act will give approximately \$25 million of State funds to local municipalities every year to put towards creation and support of affordable housing, conservation, and historical preservation. The State monies will match funds gained if a town elects to raise its taxes by up to 3%. Use of these funds is determined locally. In Berkshire County, Stockbridge and Williamstown have elected to participate in the provisions of the Community Development Act, enabling them as the only two municipalities able to receive state funds from a pool of funds designed to serve all 32 Berkshire County municipalities.

Recommendation #7 Re-apply for EO418 Housing Certification for Becket

Becket has already been EO418 Housing Certified for Year 3. Continued Certification gives the town preferential status when applying for \$45 million in grant opportunities available annually by the State.

V. References and Resources

- ^{1.} Becket Town Assessor Data, January, 2001.
- ^{2.} Housing For Everyone: Housing Needs, Barriers & Opportunities in South-Central Towns of Berkshire County, Community Opportunities Group, Inc., 2002.
- ^{3.} US. Census Bureau, 2000 Census.
- ^{4.} Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Buildout Analysis Community Profiles, June 2000.
- ^{5.} Town of Becket Building Inspector, May 2002.
- ^{6.} Warren Information Services, June 2002.
- ^{7.} Massachusetts Department of Revenue, Division of Local Statistics, June 2002.
- ^{8.} Massachusetts Institute for Social and Economic Research (MISER) State Data Center, June 2002.
- ^{9.} Berkshire Housing Services, a regional Section 8 administering agency, 2002.
- ^{10.} Massachusetts Department of Employment and Training, June 2002.

Appendix B.1: Affordability Gap Analysis

Methodology

The housing affordability study was conducted to determine whether or not the “typical” family in Town could actually afford to buy a home in Town at current market values. The typical family was defined as a household with an income equal to the median estimated income of the Town. The Town’s median household income for 2000 was provided by the US Census Bureau’s 2000 Census. According to HUD guidelines, housing is considered to be affordable when monthly mortgage payments comprise no more than twenty-eight percent (28%) of a household’s total monthly income. Therefore, to get the “Maximum Affordable Home Price” for each income bracket, this study uses 28% of the Census monthly household income figure as a monthly payment for the “How Much House Can I Afford?” mortgage calculator available at the Legacy Bank website. The payments are then adjusted according to local insurance estimates provided by a local homeowner’s insurance provider, and an assumption of a 10% down payment.

Warren Information Services (WIS) provided sales data for Single Family Home sales in Becket during 2001. The Affordability Gap Analysis counts the number of homes sold in 2001 that are under the maximum available sales price for each income bracket. An affordability gap appears if there are not enough homes available to a certain income bracket. For instance, in Becket, 24% of the households are considered low income. Only 21% of the homes sold in 2001 would have been affordable to these 24%. Therefore, there is a 3% affordability gap for low-income households in Becket. This is evidence that the single family housing market may be shifting out of reach of lower income families in Becket.

Table H-6: Affordability Gap Analysis for Becket, MA (2001 Sales Data)

Household Income Level	Price of Calculated Maximum Affordable Home	Number of 2001 Sales affordable to These Households	Total Number of Becket Households in this Bracket in 2000	Percent of Total Becket Households in 2000	% 2001 Sales affordable by these Households	Affordability Gap
Poverty <30% of Median (up to \$14,215)	\$41,452	6	86	13%	10.5%	2.5%
Low Income Up to 50% of Median (up to \$23,693)	\$69,136	12	163	24%	21%	3%
Moderate Income Up to 80% of Median (up to \$37,908)	\$110,582	25	241	35%	44%	No Gap
Middle Income Up to 150% of Median (up to \$71,079)	\$207,400	44	523	76%	77%	No Gap
High Income Over 150% of median (Over \$71,079)	Over \$207,400	57	685	100%	100%	No Gap

Median Income (\$47,386)	\$138,793	34	373	54%	60%	No Gap
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Appendix B.2: Improving Durability In Housing: Life Expectancy of Housing Components

Gopal Ahluwalia and Angela Shackford
March, 1999

This paper was prepared for the Partnership for Advancing Technology in Housing, National Forum on Durability Research held in Upper Marlboro Maryland on March 31, 1999. Forum was sponsored by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and hosted by NAHB Research Center, Inc. This paper was prepared to stimulate the thinking of the forum participants about the current state of durability of housing materials and components and about various approaches to improving durability.

The life expectancies of the components of a home depend on the quality of installation, level of maintenance during use, the weather and climate conditions, and the intensity of use. Some components may remain functional while becoming obsolete because of changing styles and tastes or technological improvements in new products. The average life for some components has increased during the past 20 years because of new products, while the average life of others has declined.

There are more than 100 million homes in the housing stock today, with a median age of 28 years. About 23 percent of the housing stock is more than 50 years old, and some homes are more than 200 years old. The 1940 census reported that there were 37.3 million homes, with a median age of 25 years. The 1990 census found that 18.4 million existing homes were built before 1940, suggesting that nearly half the units that existed 50 years ago are still in use—rather remarkable considering how many of the homes at that time were of poor quality. An old home typically has the original foundation and framing (or concrete block walls). Some even have original doors, windows, and flooring. But most other components have been added or replaced since the home was built.

NAHB conducted a comprehensive survey of manufacturers, trade associations, and researchers involved in building material products to develop information about the longevity of housing components. Several of the people interviewed qualified their answers, noting variations based on the quality of materials, quality of installation, and whether maintenance has been performed. This article provides a synopsis of the survey results.

The typical life of a *major appliance* is about 15 years. The average refrigerator or kitchen range lasts a bit longer. Washing machines, which tend to take more abuse, have a somewhat shorter lifespan.

The average life expectancy of *bathroom products and materials* varies from 10 to 15 years for fiberglass bathtubs and showers to 50 years for cast iron bathtubs and commodes. Shower doors last about 25 years. The average life expectancy of a toilet is 10 to 15 years, but the longevity of toilet seats has declined with the substitution of plastic for metal bolts. Medicine cabinets and bath vanities are expected to last 20 years; the paint finish in the interior of medicine cabinets usually wears down, causing the metal to rust from moisture in the bathroom.

Kitchens are the focal point of today's homes. Modern cabinetry and appliances are more efficient and need less maintenance than in the past. Plastic laminates and solid *acrylic countertops* are very durable. Traditional countertop materials such as wood, soapstone, or enameled steel have been superseded by modern countertop materials. Countertops made of marble, granite, slate, or wood are very expensive, but most manufacturers of modern plastic laminate and solid acrylics offer products that look similar to these natural materials. Kitchen cabinets are expected to last 15 to 20 years, but are often replaced sooner.

The life expectancy of *doors* depends on the amount of protection it gets from the weather. Interior doors, depending on quality, will last from 30 years to life. Exterior doors that are protected with an overhang are expected to last 80 to 100 years, while exterior doors that are unprotected and exposed average a life of 25 to 30 years. Sliding and folding doors last from 30 years to the life of the home. While garage doors last 20 to 50 years, the expected life of garage door openers is only 10 years.

Flooring made of natural materials lasts a great deal longer than synthetic flooring. Oak and pine flooring lasts as long as the home; marble also usually lasts for the lifetime of the home. Vinyl sheet or vinyl tile flooring lasts an average of 20 to 30 years, which is not bad

considering that carpeting lasts only about 11 years, depending on the quality of installation, the amount of traffic, and quality of the fibers.

Poured footings and foundations last about 200 years, while concrete block foundations last about 100 years. Waterproofing with a bituminous coating lasts 10 years, but pargeing with ionite lasts 20 to 30 years.

Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems require regular maintenance in order to work efficiently, but even with proper maintenance most components of such systems will not last longer than 15 to 20 years. Central air conditioning units last an average of 15 years, whereas the life expectancy of window units is only 10 years. Humidifiers last only 3 years. Electric water heaters are expected to last 14 years with proper maintenance, which includes flushing the tank, checking the valves, and cleaning electrical connections regularly. Heat pumps last an average of 15 years.

Home security appliances have a life expectancy of about 10 years. Intrusion systems (burglar alarms) last about 14 years, smoke detectors last about 12 years, and smoke/fire/intrusion systems last about 10 years.

Most manmade elements of *landscaping* have a life expectancy of 10 to 20 years. Patios (brick or concrete) last 24 years. Wooden decks last about 15 years, depending on the materials and products used (treated yellow pine is guaranteed to last 40 years). Gravel walks last only about 4 years, while asphalt driveways last 10 years. Tennis courts and swimming pools have life expectancies of 10 years and 18 years, respectively.

Masonry can last as long as the home. Chimneys, fireplaces, brick veneer, and mantels are expected to last just as long. Brick and stone walls have an average life of 100 years.

Of course, *millwork* has a much shorter life than masonry. Stairs have an average life expectancy of 50 to 100 years, while rails and disappearing stairs will last 30 to 40 years.

Homes usually need to be painted every 5 to 10 years depending on the content of the paint and its exposure to moisture. Interior wall paint lasts an average of 5 to 10 years, depending on the acrylic content of the paint. Exterior paint on wood, brick, or aluminum lasts about 5 to 10 years.

Most plumbing materials last a long time. Concrete pipes have an average life of 50 to 100 years and cast iron waste pipes last 75 to 100 years. Enameled steel sinks have a life expectancy of only 5 to 10 years, while enameled cast iron sinks last 25 to 30 years. The life expectancy of faucets depends on the finish—a chrome finish lasts much longer than a brass or enamel finish. Low quality faucets last 2 to 5 years less than higher quality faucets, which last 15 to 20 years.

The life of a roof depends on the quality of the *roofing material*. *Slate* has the longest life expectancy among roofing materials, ranging from 50 to 100 years depending on the grade. Sheet metal has a life expectancy of 20 to 100 years if kept painted, and tiles last for about 50 years. Asphalt shingles, the most commonly used roofing material, last 15 to 30 years.

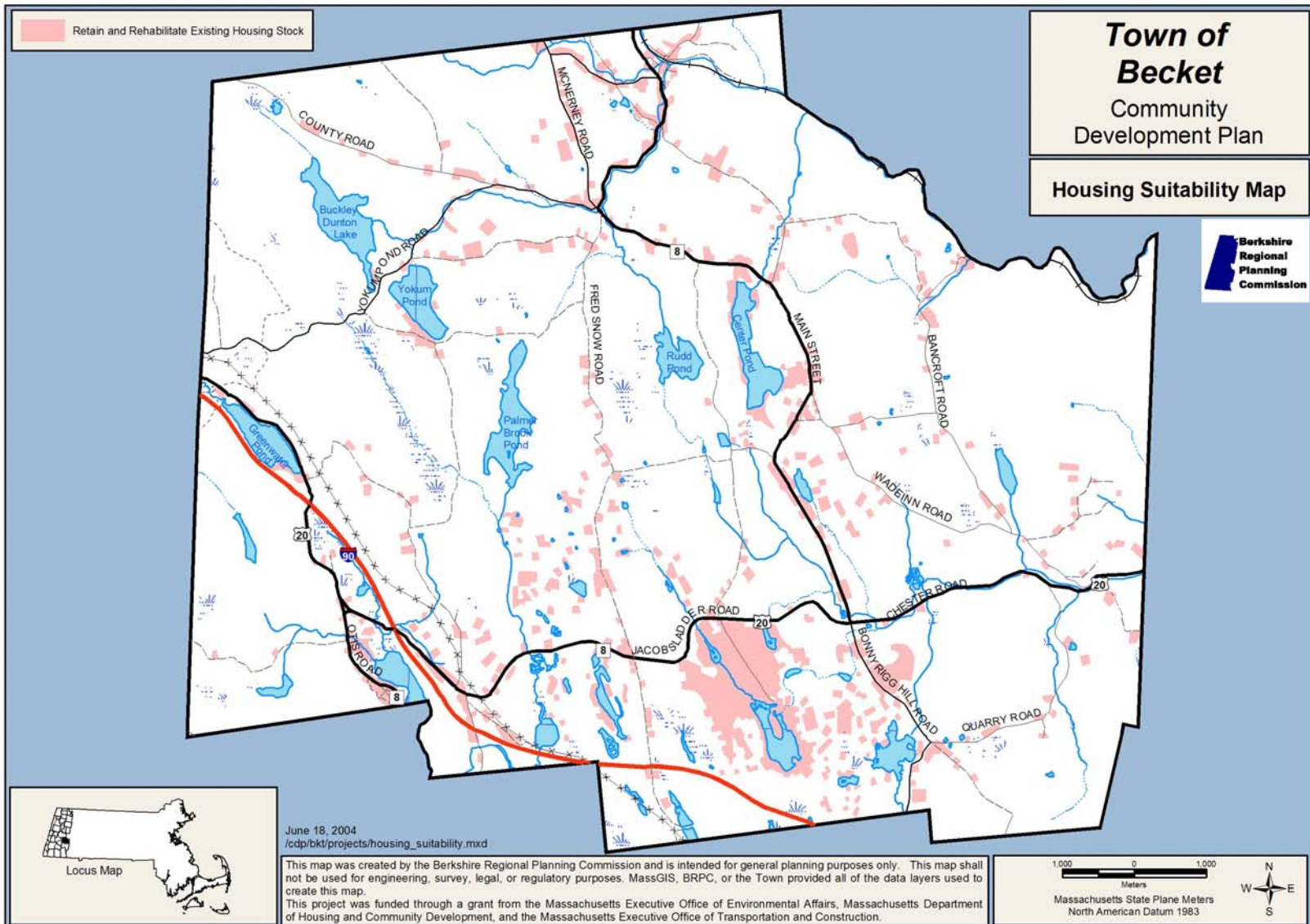
Basements, floor systems, and exterior and interior framing walls last 100 to 200 years with proper installation and maintenance. A common problem in homes is a leaky basement. Construction technology has made significant improvements in this area by improving the quality of the materials involved in constructing a basement.

The life expectancy of *shutters* depends on the materials used and their exposure to the weather. Exterior wood shutters last only 4 to 5 years, but interior wood shutters usually last for the life of the home. Plastic (vinyl) exterior shutters have a life of 7 to 8 years. Aluminum interior shutters last 35 to 50 years, but aluminum exterior shutters last only 3 to 5 years.

The life expectancy of *siding* depends largely on the material used. Aluminum lasts 20 to 50 years. Vinyl can last 50 years. Wood/composite wood lasts only 10 years, if it is not properly maintained, but can survive for 200 years if it is kept waterproofed and painted. Brick and stone siding can last for 100 years, but the mortar holding the brick lasts for only 50 years. Gutters and downspouts last about 30 years.

Drywall and plaster are expected to last 30 to 70 years and ceramic tiles for as long as the life of the home. Windows should last about 20 years before needing replacement.

Window glazing is expected to last 20 years. Aluminum and vinyl casement windows should last 20 to 30 years, and wood casement windows have a life expectancy of 20 to 50 years.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN TOWN OF BECKET



Economic Development



Economic Development

Introduction to Economic Development
Economic Development Element

6

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6-2

Economic Development Element



The Economic Development Element provides an economic profile of the Town of Becket then focuses on a more detailed analysis of the Town's most prominent commercial area, the North Becket Village. This element provides socio-economic background data and a comprehensive inventory of physical assets and land uses in the North Becket Village Area. The existing conditions of the North Becket Village are documented and analyzed through narrative, photographs and GIS mapping products. The economic development element provides a summary of the Village area's challenges and opportunities as related to economic development. Site specific information including conceptual designs related to the development of the proposed Mullen House Education/Visitor Center are also discussed in detail. Finally, a number of recommended actions to improve economic conditions in the village center are provided.

**Community Development Plan
2004 Economic Development Element
Town of Becket**

I. Introduction

The Becket Economic Development Element was developed as a result of a community-based effort to identify the Town's Economic Development needs and engage in planning to address those needs. Through the Massachusetts Executive Order 418 Community Development Plan process, BRPC researched and compiled an economic data profile for the Town of Becket (See Appendix A). The profile includes extensive data covering number of local employers, employees, wages, annual payroll, median household income levels of labor force and population characteristics. The economic data profile was developed as a requirement of the Community Development Plan. The information and data in the profile was used to inform the research and analysis for the economic development element of this plan.

This Economic Development Element is compilation of information gathered from the data profile, input and analysis by the consultant, the Community Development Advisory Committee and a broad range of other stakeholders residing in Becket. During the course of the Community Development Plan process it was evident that a central concern of the town was to maintain and revitalize the North Becket Village area as the economic and cultural hub of the community. The process also identified that the primary catalyst for revitalizing the Village area was the renovation and conversion of the Historic Mullen House Property into a local educational and visitor's center that will serve as an anchor for future Village improvements and revitalization. The North Becket Village Area will be the focal point of this element. The function of this element is to document existing economic conditions in the Town as whole and specifically in the North Becket Village Area, discuss economic challenges and opportunities that have been identified in the North Becket Village and provide recommendations for action based on the technical analysis and input from the public.

II. Background

Becket, like other small towns in the area, has unemployment rates that trend historically lower than the County and Statewide averages. Between 1995-2002 the unemployment rate averaged about 3.5%. As of April 2003 the unemployment rate in Becket was 2.8%. The latest available statistics available from the Massachusetts Department of Employment and Training indicate that Becket has 33 local employers and 450 jobs available locally . The number of local jobs has tripled since 1985. The annual average wages for those employed locally also rose by about 228 % from 1985 to 2000 going from \$9,755 to \$22,181. The Town's combined total annual payroll increased dramatically between 1985 and 2000 going from \$1,024,300 (1985) to \$7,186,543(2000). However, in spite of the increase in local jobs and average annual wages, people working in the Town, on average, still received considerably less than the county average of \$32,921. Of the jobs available locally, 90% are in the "service" sector and the remaining 10% are in the production of "goods". Service sector jobs typically pay less than jobs in the goods production sector. It was noted anecdotally by

local residents that there does appear to be a recent, and significant increase in local contractors and construction trades that is closely related to the significant local demand for second homes and the need to maintain these homes. It was further noted that a significant number of home based businesses and cottage industries seem to be emerging in Town. These types of jobs typically pay well and will probably be soon reflected in gains in the Town's annual average wage.

In terms of those who live in the Town but may work elsewhere, the change in median household income during the last decade (1990-2000) has increased by \$15,371 or very nearly 50%. Becket's median household income (\$46,806 in 2000) was also about 20% percent higher than the county median household income, but about 8% less than the state median income. In spite of these gains, the Town still has close to 35% of its households that are considered low-to-moderate income (LMI), i.e. they are making less than 80 % of the median income for the county. Persons in the LMI category often meet the baseline eligibility requirements for a variety of publicly subsidized programs.

III. Need for Economic Development in Becket

Some of the local economic issues are noted in the previous section, for example even though more, better paying jobs are being created locally there is still need to strengthen the town's economic base. The local jobs that do exist, and have recently been created, do not pay very well and local wages are not comparable to the average wages for the County. A more specific economic issue is the Town's overwhelming dependence on residential property taxes. Although Becket's tax rate (\$9.92 in 2004) is in the bottom 20 percentile in the Commonwealth, approximately 92% of local property tax levy come from residential taxpayers with only 8% coming from non-residential sources (MA DOR 2004 – Municipal data bank). The Total Assessed Value (TAV) of all property in Becket is nearly \$287.9 million, only about \$24.6 million of the assessed value is non-residential (MA DOR 2004- municipal data bank).

It should be noted that \$14.4 million of the non-residential value is "personal property" which indicates that a significant portion of this amount is actually residential in nature, i.e. second-homes, furnishings etc., and does not actually reflect a reduction in the residential tax burden. It does illustrate that a significant portion of the residential tax burden is being borne by part-time residents and through their significant contributions in "personal property tax", the residential tax rates for year round residents is maintained at a relatively low level. Year round residents and long time natives clearly understand that their relatively low residential tax rates are a direct result of personal property taxes generated through second homeowners. It is also understood that what draws second-home owners to the Town is the pastoral setting with minimal commercial development, i.e. no strip malls, big-box retail or fast-food chains. This situation creates a challenge when considering issues of economic development. The challenge is balancing the need to maintain the Town's unique traditional charm, which attracts second-home owners, and broadening the Town's narrow tax base to allow for limited commercial growth that is appropriate to the community.

As long as local tax rates remain at the current low rate, this may not seem to be a critical issue. If circumstances were to change and local taxes were to begin to rise

rapidly, the Town would experience pressure to broaden its tax base and shift some of the burden away from residential taxpayers. Some examples of circumstances that could result in rapid changes to the local tax rate include: significant increases in education costs, construction or major improvements to public facilities, other big-ticket capital expenses (e.g. purchase of emergency vehicles, snow plows etc...), and significant reductions in state aid and payment-in-lieu of taxes (PILOT). A number of the issues and pressures noted are extremely relevant to the Town of Becket and highlight the need to broaden and diversify the local property tax base to include greater revenues from non-residential sources.

III. Description of Existing Conditions

A common characteristic of small towns in this sub-region is that economic activity is closely tied to scenic, recreational and cultural venues that sustain a small retail and service industry that is primarily based on tourism, recreation and cultural attractions. This general description is applicable to Becket, and even more specifically descriptive of the North Becket Village area, which will be the focal point of the remainder of the economic development element.

This section of the element will focus on documenting the existing conditions affecting economic development in the North Becket Village. This description will include a discussion of the village area boundaries, physical inventory of real property and structures, physical characteristics and condition of structures, ownership status, zoning and land uses, utilities and available infrastructure. This section will also provide demographic information on the village area including number of employers, number of jobs types of businesses, services and attractions. Finally this section will also provide a detailed description of the existing conditions of the Mullen House property.

A. North Becket Village Area Boundary

For the purposes of this study the North Becket Village on is bound to the south by North Becket Cemetery (parcel number 207-42) and Bear Creek Farm (parcel number 207-82) and runs north along Route 8 up to the Becket/Washington border. It encompasses Leland Road, High Street and Pleasant Street, stretches east along the railroad tracks ending at the Becket/Chester border, west along Brooker Hill Road stopping on the far side of Carter Road, and northwest along Washington Street stopping at the border of Becket and Washington. An aerial map outlining the North Becket Village area is included as Appendix A.1.

B. Physical Characteristics of Village Area



The study area is a thickly settled, traditional village area. The area contains about 105 parcels of land totaling roughly 964 square acres, or about 1/30 of the entire town. Of the 105 parcels in the north village area, 75 parcels have been developed (i.e. some type of structure or facility is present on the land) and 30 parcels are undeveloped. Most of the buildings in the area are two-story farmhouses

that were built between 1850 and 1920. The oldest home in the area was built in 1780 and the newest home was built in 1973. The homes range in size from 560 sf to 4542 sf. A detailed inventory of all parcels and uses within the study area is included as Appendix A.2.

C. Zoning and Land Uses

The Town of Becket only has a single Agricultural/Residential zoning district. The Town also adopted a Historic District overlay within the North Becket Village. About 40 of the parcels in the study area are included in the Historic District (see attached map of Historic District). In spite of the single zoning district, the village exhibits the traditional characteristics of a village by hosting a variety of diverse uses. The principle uses in the village area are described in the table below and a map of the land uses is included as Appendix A.2a and a map of the historic district is included as Appendix A.3.

Principal Land Use	Number of Parcels in North Becket Village	Notes, Comments
Commercial	3	
Residential	64	
Municipal	15	
Non-Profit	1	Becket Federated Church
Utilities	2	Verizon Building and NY Central RR
Vacant	20	Undeveloped, open spaces or developed but unused
Total	105	

D. Utilities and Infrastructure

The Town does not have a public water or sewer system. Electric and gas services connections are available locally. Wireless phone services and high-speed internet access is unreliable in Becket.

The towns primary transportation routes are Route 8 (north/south) and Route 20 (east /west) and the Massachusetts Turnpike (Interstate 90). Freight rail access is available from Conrail and the tracks run right through North Becket Village with at least one spur. The town has no bus service and is not associated with the regional transit authority. Nearest general aviation facility is the Great Barrington Airport.

E. Employment in North Becket Village

The sources researched indicated that there about 11 business establishments that operate within the Village area. The estimated number of people employed in the village ranges from 90-120. The two largest local employers in Becket are the Kushi Institute (53 employees) and Becket-Washington School (36 employees). Both of these employers are located within the North Becket Village area. There are several other

establishments business and cultural establishments in the Village Area that account for an additional 20-25 jobs. Just about 25 % of all the local jobs in Becket are concentrated within the North Becket Village area and this area still appears to be Town's economic hub. The recent closure of the General Store and the relocation of the Post Office have resulted in the loss of 10-15 jobs in the village area.

F. Village Attractions and Services

In addition to the numerous historic homes that comprise the Historic District, the North Becket Village has a number of other services and attractions. The key attractions are listed below.

Becket Athenaeum	Becket Arts Center	Becket/Washington School
Old Post Office	Old General Store	Shaker Mill Brook
The Mullen House	Bidwell Park	North Becket Cemetery
Verizon Switching Station	New York Central Railroad	

F. Description of existing conditions of Mullen House Property

The Mullen House property is a municipally-owned historic home that is located in the geographic heart of North Becket Village. The house is a two-story farm house that was built in 1845 and has about 1810 sf of existing, usable space. The house is situated on about one-quarter of an acre of land facing the Becket Federated Church directly to the east and the Becket Arts Center and Athenaeum directly to the south. The house was donated to the Town and for



several years was leased to the local Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post as meeting facility. Once the lease was terminated, the building was in state of disrepair and the Town voted to sell the property. However, the town did not receive any acceptable bids for the property and the Town eventually voted again to keep the house and rehabilitate it for future community uses. In 2003, the Town appointed a Task Force of local residents representing a broad range of community interests to lead the effort to plan, finance, rehabilitate and ultimately manage the Mullen House property.

The Task Force has moved forward with speed and diligence and has nearly completed the planning stages of the rehabilitation efforts. As a part of this planning effort the Task Force, who jointly serves as the Community Development Plan Advisory Committee, retained an architect to prepare a comprehensive evaluation of the condition of the house and an itemized list of necessary repairs and improvements with detailed cost

estimate for repairs. The architect also provided draft floor plans and elevations for the building. All of the work prepared by the architect is included as Appendix A.4. The Task Force also retained the services of engineer to finalize designs for an upgraded septic system, well, and parking plan. These products are also included in this document as Appendix A.5. The total cost for associated site work and building rehabilitation is estimated at approximately \$217,000.

The task force is currently in the process of seeking funding for the rehabilitation project. The Task Force has received a \$25,000 local appropriation earmarked for the repair of the septic system and a \$3,000 grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation to perform additional advanced planning and design. The Task Force had applied for a \$50,000 Massachusetts Turnpike Authority Tourism grant in 2003, which did not receive funding. It is being recommended that the Town reapply for these funds in 2004 funding cycle. The Task Force will also be forming a non-profit organization to apply for \$250,000 from the 1772 Foundation to fund the rehabilitation and improvements to the facility. The Task Force also submitted an initial project brief with the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee to get this project on the CEDS list of project priorities for the sub-region.

The following sections of this element will provide discussion on the proposed uses of the Mullen House, how the Mullen House will serve as a catalyst for broader revitalization of the North Becket Village area, potential obstacles to the rehabilitation project, and recommendations for financing, rehabilitating and managing the property following rehabilitation.

IV. Discussion of Economic Challenges

There are three primary and immediate challenges facing the North Becket Village in terms of economic development, 1) loss of key businesses, services, and jobs 2) loss of character/identity as the economic, cultural and civic center of the Town, and 3) under-utilization of valuable spaces within the village area. In addition to the primary challenges, there are also a number of secondary challenges that will also be discussed these include; public resistance to local (particularly commercial) development, regulatory obstacles to commercial development and lack of adequate infrastructure.

A. Loss of Businesses, Services and Jobs

This factor is the most immediate challenge facing the Village area. The recent closure of the General Store and the imminent relocation of the Post Office will dramatically alter the dynamics and character of the village area in a negative way. During the course of the planning process it became extremely clear that these two establishments not only provided valuable goods and services to the village and the community at large, but perhaps more importantly served as the hub of village social activity and as a central gathering place for the community. The general store provided the community with convenience and local access to essential commodities such as food and automobile fuel as well as providing a few



local jobs and contributing to the Town's commercial tax base. The relocation of the Post Office will not result in a loss of jobs for the Town or create a significant inconvenience for most residents.

However, it will leave another vacated storefront in a very prominent location within the village. It is extremely difficult to attract new commercial enterprises, or convince existing business to expand in an area where others are fleeing. Businesses retention logically precedes attracting new businesses. It is understood that General Store is under contract to be sold, however even if the premises is purchased by a new owner, there is no certainty that the Store will reopen and remain in its current use.

B. Loss of Village Character/Identity

The construction of the new Town Hall and Post Office far outside the North Village area coupled with the closure of the General Store and relocation of the Old Post Office has effectively diminished the importance of the North Becket Village as the Town's central hub. Even though many of the commercial, recreational and cultural activities remain in the Village, the civic functions and many commercial enterprises have developed well outside the village area. The village area could become increasingly less relevant if cultural venues, civic functions and commercial enterprises continue to gravitate toward other areas of Town and the village area does not retain its remaining establishments. Once again, it will be difficult to encourage remaining businesses to expand, or to attract new businesses to the area if it appears to be in decline. Another element of this issues is that when newer structures or facilities are built or rehabilitated in the area, the structures should be aesthetically consistent with the village area. For example, throughout the planning process it was noted that the Verizon Building in the center of the village is completely incongruous with the other buildings in the area and diminishes the character of the village as whole.



C. Underutilization of valuable spaces in the Village area

In addition to storefronts being vacated in the village area, there are also properties that are not being used to their highest and best use. This is another factor that contributes to diminishing the village character and serves as a disincentive for attracting new enterprises to the area. Until the Task Force began its work, the Mullen House was an example of this issue, i.e. a good building that was in an excellent location and central to all

key venues in the village but it was only being used occasionally as a meeting place for a private membership group and was providing minimal year round benefit to the community. A current example of this is the old lumberyard site (parcel number 206-88 on Appendix A.2). The old lumberyard site was once a thriving enterprise that provided the Town with jobs and significant commercial property tax revenues. The 5-acre site also has direct rail access. However, now the site is unsightly and appears to simply be used as a storage area for equipment and debris. It provides no local employment and

the assessed valuation of the property is likely in decline, i.e. the land provides the Town with minimal local property tax revenue.

D. Local resistance to commercial development

A common theme in most small, ex-urban communities in southern Berkshire County is desire to prohibit, or severely limit, commercial development regardless of scale character, and worthiness of the project. During the planning process it was evident that a number of participants wanted the village area to remain essentially unchanged and somewhat inaccessible to outsiders. Most people live in an area or move to an area because they like the place as it is and have little desire to see it dramatically changed. One of the primary charms of the North Becket Village area is its quaintness and tranquility. Most small towns do not want their village area to become a replication of the traffic problems and tourist bustle associated with places like downtown Stockbridge and Lee. However, when commercial development is completed stifled in a village area this usually results in economic atrophy and eventual decline of the area.

E. Lack of Infrastructure and Regulatory Obstacles

A final challenge that faces Becket (as well as most of the smaller, rural communities in the area) in terms of economic development is the lack of infrastructure and appropriate zoning for commercial enterprises. Becket does not have a public sewer or water system. The village area itself is also designed to primarily accommodate vehicular traffic and being situated on major state highway with minimal sidewalks or pathways, it is not very inviting to pedestrians or bicyclists. Cell phone coverage and high-speed internet access in the area is also somewhat unreliable. This factor is not only a deterrent to conventional businesses, but more acutely affects small and home-based businesses. Small-scale and micro-businesses often rely heavily on the internet and telecommunications for various aspects of their enterprise including marketing, purchasing, sales, and distribution. Once again, typical to most towns in the area of similar size and composition, Becket only has a single zoning district, which is Residential/Agricultural with some "light commercial" uses allowed by special permit. Also as an accessory use, some home-based business activities are allowed by right.

V. Opportunities

In spite of the local economic challenges, there also appears to be significant potential for economic growth in the village area. While the vacated buildings and sites in the village area have been discussed as a challenge, they also represent a considerable opportunity for the introduction of new or improved uses. The variety of cultural and natural attractions in immediate proximity to the village area, also present opportunity for economic growth. The construction of the new Becket /Washington Elementary School is a major opportunity that has been realized and will offer the village with continued economic opportunities in terms of providing a ready made customer base (faculty and staff members) and an exceptional venue for community sponsored events. Undoubtedly, the most promising opportunity is the rehabilitation of the Mullen House Property into a local education and visitor's center. Other peripheral factors that affect the cost of doing business, such as the price of property and tax rates, can provide

opportunity for economic growth. This section will discuss each of these opportunities in greater detail.

A. General Store and Post Office Buildings

The General Store and Post Office are widely recognized by community at large as a local necessity and integral to the character and well being of North Becket Village. Throughout the planning process it was continually reiterated that if the General Store were to remain closed, the village would just never be quite the same and it was paramount that the General Store be reopened for the same use. The current owner, who recently retired, is allegedly under contract to sell the store to a new owner. The owners of the Old Post Office building have not publicly stated a preference for what they would like the building to be used for once the building is vacated. The opportunity with these buildings lies in the fact that they are in a period transition and could be marketed for a number of potential commercial uses that would add value to the village area. A number of potential uses were discussed for these buildings by the Community Development Plan Advisory Committee and other interested residents and property owners in Becket. Some of the potential uses discussed for these sites included; upscale wine or liquor sales, restaurant/ pizza parlor, bank or automated teller machine, art studio/ gallery, and real estate sales offices. The community participants made clear that certain uses of the building would also be unacceptable, primarily fast food establishments, chain stores/franchises or other types of uses that would be inconsistent with the traditional New England character of the village.



The town's key considerations when determining appropriate uses for these sites should be: 1) is the proposed use consistent with the character of village, 2) does the proposed use create new, or retain existing, quality jobs locally, 3) does the proposed use add value to the property and subsequently add to the commercial tax base, 4) does the proposed use provide the village and the community with a valuable or necessary good or service.

B. Former Lumberyard Site

This five acre site's proximity to rail access, Route 8 and the Village center could have redevelopment potential for a variety of uses beyond its current use of a storage and staging area. Most of the community discussion focused on acquiring the property for

conversion to community space such as community gardens or extending the adjacent public park. The only commercial application that was discussed was converting the property into a small-scale agricultural facility, e.g. Community Supported Agriculture farm, a farmer's market or something similar. There are a number of potential issues with the property that would need to be explored before any future applications are pursued. It would need to be determined if there is contamination present on the site. The site is also located in a flood plain. Based on the current site condition it is also anticipated that a significant amount of site work and general clean up would need to occur before the property would be suitable for redevelopment.

Once again, when considering appropriate uses for this site, the criteria mentioned above should guide the local planning and decision-making process.

C. Natural and Cultural Attractions

The Village's fusion of cultural, historic , recreational and natural attractions serve as one of the village's strongest and most enduring assets. The Athenaeum, Arts Center the Federated Church, North Becket Cemetery, the Historic District , Shaker Mill Brook, Bidwell Park all provide the right balance of history, style and uses to provide for the quintessential village setting that is thoroughly enjoyed by locals and coveted by visitors. These venues and special places are economic, as well as aesthetic assets, that have proven effective at drawing visitors to the village area. Numerous other venues in close proximity to the village area, such the Historic Quarry Site, Jacob's Pillow and the Kushi Institute also serve as magnets attracting visitors to the village area. The only shortfall, from an economic development perspective, is that there is not vibrant commercial presence in the village to service the needs of locals and visitors.

D. Becket/ Washington School

The new school facility provides economic opportunities to the village area in two indirect, but important ways. First, the school is the Town's largest full-time employer, and most of the jobs provided by the school are quality jobs that pay relatively well. Why is this important to the village in terms of economic development? The answer is because the employees are also consumers who work in the area nearly everyday and would be very likely to spend their money in close proximity to their workplace- if opportunities were available. This logic could also be extended to the parents of the students who may be in the area everyday to pick-up and drop-off their children. The second way that the school can indirectly provides economic opportunity is by using the facility as venue for community –sponsored events, which will intern draw locals and visitors to the village area. Once they are in the area, there is a good chance they will spend locally, if opportunities are available.



E. Mullen House Education/Visitor Center

The proposed Mullen House Education/Visitor Center is envisioned by the community as the catalyst for revitalization of North Becket Village as well as serving as an anchor for the village's economic and social activity. The proposed facility rehabilitation will add value to the village area on a number of levels. First, it is anticipated that the proposed facility will directly result in the creation of 5-10 new jobs locally. The projected jobs will also span a range of skill sets and pay ranges. The facility will also provide some direct revenues to the Town from tenant organizations that will reside in the Center. It is anticipated that these revenues will be used to operate and maintain the Center on a long-term basis. The proposed facility rehabilitation will also preserve a historic building while adding to the aesthetics of the village area and the historic district. The primary function of the Center will be to educate and inform locals, visitors and children about the history, culture and environment of the community and the region. The Center is likely to be staffed by volunteers and offer exhibits, interpretive walks and tours, lectures, activities and general information to locals and visitors. A public comfort station is also planned for the facility. The visitor center will also have marketing materials available promoting local and regional vendors and venues. This new facility is intended to serve not only as an educational and informational clearing house, but it will be an attraction in and of itself.

F. Costs of Doing Business

While not as important as the other opportunities noted above, a relatively low cost of doing business can create a favorable climate for business attraction and enterprise development. For example, the price of land is less expensive in Becket relative to other areas of south Berkshire County and much less expensive than major metropolitan areas in near proximity, i.e. Greater Boston, Greater New York and some areas of Greater Albany. The same applies to property tax rates. Becket has a single tax rate for all properties, i.e. there is not a separate "commercial" tax rate as in most urbanized areas. As noted, the tax rate is far lower than most of the state, and lower than other neighboring areas in the county. For example, the tax rate of \$15.50 (2002) in Lee and \$15.62 (2002) in Great Barrington is about 57% higher than the rate of \$9.92 (2004) in Becket. The commercial tax rate of \$30.33(2002) in Boston is about 206% higher than the rate in Becket. The property tax rate in Albany, NY is \$35.11(2002), this is 253% higher than the rate in Becket. Though tax rates are usually not a primary deciding factor of where to locate a business, tax rates certainly are one of the factors affecting the decision. Of course the lower the tax rates, the more attractive this factor becomes to potential businesses.

Public Input and Goal Development

The Mullen House Task Force was appointed by the Becket Board of Selectmen in early 2003. The group is comprised of local citizens who represent a broad range of community interests and opinions. The Task Force is charged with the ongoing task of planning, rehabilitating and managing the municipally-owned Mullen House property, in the center of North Becket Village. The Task Force's mission and vision to turn the

Mullen House into a center for education and the environment and to revitalize the North Becket Village are linked closely to the stated objectives of the Community Development Plan (CDP) process and as a result the Task Force was also charged with acting as the CDP Advisory Committee (Committee) and given responsibility for completing the plan.

The Committee meets regularly, usually once every two weeks, to discuss, develop, and promote the plan. As the CDP Advisory Committee they have held approximately 20 meetings (minutes from many of the meetings are included as Appendix A.5. The Committee also met frequently with their consultant to outline ideas and concepts that could be used to facilitate discussion at the public meeting. The CDP Advisory Committee meetings culminated in a public charette open to all key stakeholders and interested village residents on March 8th 2004. Approximately 45 attended the public meeting.

The planning process which included; the collection and analysis of relevant data and information, review and discussion of information with Advisory Committee, public discussion of findings has resulted in the following issues, goals and recommendations related to economic development in the North Becket Village Area:

Issue – Loss of Business, Jobs and Services in the Village Area

- Key village business has closed down.
- Post Office is moving to alternate location.
- Potentially both of these storefronts in the heart of the village will be vacant

Goal – Support retention and growth of existing business in the village area and support limited new commercial uses in the Village area

Recommended Actions

- Build local organizational capacity to support economic development efforts in the village area. This can be accomplished by assigning this task to an existing local entity, such as the Planning Board, or creating a new local entity, for example a Village Area Business Association or an Economic Development Commission, or by partnering with an existing entity such a local Chamber of Commerce or Community Development Corporation.
- Develop guidelines to ensure that commercial development is localized, small-scale and compatible with the character of the village and the community at large.
- Review local by-laws to ensure that they do not pose barriers to the type of commercial development activities that would be most suitable in North Becket Village such as home-based businesses, cottage industries, and locally-owned, small-scale retail businesses catering to the arts, tourism and recreation
- Identify programs and organizations that can assist the town in developing a program for retention of successful existing businesses.
- Identify and support local establishments that are successful and may be considering expansion. Once identified connect these businesses with appropriate organizational and financial resources (e.g. grants, low-interest loans, investment tax credits, community development corporations etc..)

Issue - Loss of Village Character/Identity as Town Center

- Key civic functions and services are not located in the North Becket Village Area
- Business closures and relocations to other of Town
- Aging and empty storefronts
- Buildings and structures that are inconsistent with the character of the community

Goal – Maintain traditional character of North Becket Village as the Town's Economic, Cultural and Social Center**Recommended Actions**

- Invest in streetscape improvements to revitalize the Village area
 - Install landscaped islands to beautify the village center especially in the summer months.
 - Plant street shade trees and place benches strategically to create an attractive, comfortable village center.
 - Work with utilities to facilitate under-grounding of electric and telephone lines
 - Construct additional sidewalks so that entire village is safely accessible by foot particularly from the Cemetery to McNerny Road
- Consider improvements to highlight the Historic District
 - Installation of appropriate historic lighting in the village area
 - Improved signage identifying the Historic District
 - Make the walking tour map of the Historic District more readily available at various locations around the village area
 - Consider the creation of a local history museum to house and exhibit historical artifacts and documents in a central and accessible location
- Paint and maintain the appearance of the trestle bridge on High Street.
- Remove abandoned vehicles along Pleasant Street and make efforts to improve general appearance along this street.
- Establish a local Community Clean-up Day and/or an "Adopt a River or Road Program" for the Village area.
- Establish system of walking trails that link the numerous venues in the Village area to one another including linkages to natural attractions such as Shaker Mill Brook.
- Improve circulation for vehicular and pedestrian traffic
 - Improve parking signage
 - Improve point of interest signage
- Maintain , preserve and promote the Village's cultural treasures, i.e. the Arts Center and the Athenaeum

Issue – Aging Building inventory and underutilization of valuable spaces in the Village area

- Former lumberyard property has development potential but is currently being used for storage and as a staging area.

- Historic Mullen House Property is currently in the initial stages of rehabilitation to allow for occupancy but numerous other repairs and improvements are necessary for conversion to Mullen House Education/Visitors Center.
- Other village buildings are aging and in disrepair.

Goal – Rehabilitate key sites and buildings in the Village area and support full utilization or conversion to other suitable uses (in-fill development)

Recommended Actions

- Consider applying for funding to develop and implement a sign and façade improvement program and/or downtown revitalization program for the village area. This type of program funds improvements to buildings, signs and streetscapes.
- Begin efforts to rehabilitate/redevelop lumber yard site
 - Contact owner of former lumberyard property and arrange meeting to discuss potential uses of property and resources for technical assistance
 - Seek funding to perform a detailed site assessment of the former lumber yard property. Study should include 21e (hazardous materials contamination) assessment.
 - Submit initial project brief to Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee. This will put the site on a list of priority projects for the region and will assist with future funding requests.
 - Inform property owner of tools to market the site, i.e. new Berkshire Chamber of Commerce Site listing and Massachusetts Economic Development Alliance Website
- Begin construction and rehabilitation of Mullen House Education and Visitor Center
 - Finalize site planning and building design to include bid ready construction documents. Construction specification documents should be prepared in form that could be used for a public bid process.
 - Continue to aggressively seek funding for construction and rehabilitation efforts (matrix of additional public funding source is provided as Appendix A.6)
 - Work cooperatively with the town, the proposed tenant organizations and one of the project development entities identified in the following section to develop a short and long term management plan for the Mullen House property. The management plan should outline specific roles and responsibilities for the rehabilitation efforts and day-to-day management of the property once rehabilitation is complete. The plan should also include proposed timelines for project development and a budget/financial plan for the rehabilitation efforts as well as for maintenance and operations once rehabilitation is completed. Plan should also outline legal and financial arrangements for landlord/tenant relations. The development of this plan will be critical in successfully managing the project and for securing funding for construction and ultimately funding for operations and maintenance.

- Determine if the Task Force or another local entity will be acting as the project developer/manager or if an external entity will act as developer for the rehabilitation efforts. Based on the time and effort required for a project of this scale it is recommended that an experienced project management entity be used rather than local volunteers. Project development/management includes; fund development, grant and contract administration, procurement, permitting issues, contract monitoring, review and processing of payment requests, record management, progress meetings with contractors and publicly funded projects will also require wage monitoring and some level of environmental review. It is anticipated that between 140-160 hours will be required for project management tasks related to the Mullen House rehabilitation.

Financial and Organizational Resources

Below is a listing of regional organizations that can provide the Town with assistance in the development and implementation of economic and community development projects.

- o Berkshire Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee
- o Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
- o Berkshire Housing Development Corporation
- o South Berkshire Community Development Corporation
- o Pittsfield Economic Revitalization Corporation
- o Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce

A matrix of state and federal funding sources for economic and community development projects are attached as Appendix A.6.



Village Study Area

Town of Becket

Community
Development Plan

Economic Suitability Map



June 21, 2004
/cdp/bkt/projects/econ_suitability.mxd



Locus Map

This map was created by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and is intended for general planning purposes only. This map shall not be used for engineering, survey, legal, or regulatory purposes. MassGIS, BRPC, or the Town provided all of the data layers used to create this map.
This project was funded through a grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation and Construction.

- Proposed Shaker Mill Brook Trail Destination
- Proposed Mullen House Education / Visitor Center
- Re-Use/Infill Development or Potential Youth Center
- Re-Use / Infill Development
- Proposed Covered Walking Bridge and Other Improvements
- Maintain Historic District

0 500 1,000
Feet
Massachusetts State Plane Meters
North American Datum 1983



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN TOWN OF BECKET



Transportation



Transportation

Introduction to Transportation
Bicycle/Pedestrian Trail Report
Becket Village Proposed Trail System Map

7

7-1
7-2
7-12

Transportation Element



The transportation element consists of a Bicycling and Pedestrian Report that focuses on an assessment of bicycling and pedestrian safety and compatibility primarily within the North Becket village area. The report is informed by a compilation of technical data, field observations and input from the local community. The report provides analysis of the existing conditions in the North Becket Village and makes recommendations for a number of enhancements to improve the conditions for cycling and walking in the village area. The report also discusses the development of a network of off-road pedestrian trails that link various village venues and improve access and parking for key recreational areas.

Bike and Pedestrian Trail Report

Town of Becket, Massachusetts

June 2004



Prepared By

Berkshire Regional
Planning Commission

This document was prepared with funding from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Executive Office of Transportation and Construction/MHD, Department of Housing and Community Development, and Department of Economic Development.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) conducted a study of cycling and pedestrian (bike/ped) pathway development in the North Becket Village as part of the transportation element of the Town's Community Development Plan. The study measured the suitability of existing road conditions for cycling and walking with a focus on the North Becket Village Area. The study also reviews, analyzes and recommends options for development of a number of off-road walking trails that are of specific interest to the community.

The study recommendations are intended to balance recreational value, transportation utility and development feasibility. Special attention was paid to routes that connect the numerous cultural, historical and commercial venues located within the Village area with additional linkages to the Town's nearby natural attractions and recreational sites. Local residents and visitors alike will benefit from a well-organized network of bike lanes, sidewalks and trails, connecting the Village's principal attractions, residences and places of business. The recommendations aim to help alleviate conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and automobiles, encourage recreation, direct tourism, and improve the Village's overall quality of life.

The result of this plan is to integrate technical data, field observations and public input to provide recommendations for potential routes for local bicycle paths and pedestrian trails in and around the North Becket Village Area. It should be noted that all of the options, alternatives and proposals presented in this narrative and in the accompanying maps are purely conceptual and do not imply consent from property owners in cases where trails are depicted to cross, or lie within privately-owned properties. A number of procedural steps and a significantly higher degree of planning would need to occur for any of the described trails to be funded and implemented.

EXISTING BIKE/PED ROAD COMPATIBILITY

BRPC surveyed the roads, shoulders, sidewalks and traffic markings along key sections of North Becket Village's thoroughfares, inspecting for conditions compatible with safe, enjoyable walking and cycling. The following sections describe the methodology used to assess priority for cycling and pedestrian development along the roads in the Village area.

1.1 CYCLING COMPATIBILITY

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has devised a comprehensive measure of cycling suitability for roads throughout the nation: the Bicycle Compatibility Index (BCI). In December 2003, BRPC published a guide to bike/ped development in Berkshire County, *The Berkshire Bicycling and Walking Transportation Plan*, relying on the BCI as one basis of ranking cycling development priorities for roads throughout the Berkshires. The BCI weighs factors such as shoulder width, traffic flow, road markings, speed limits, and roadside parking. BCI scores range from 0.0 to 6.0, with *higher* totals indicating *worse* performance and *lower* totals indicating *better*

performance. Roads with BCI scores of 1, for example, have extremely high bike compatibility, while roads with BCI scores of 5.5 have extremely low bike compatibility.

The *Berkshire Bicycling and Walking Plan* does not rely solely on the BCI for cycling development prioritization. The *Plan's* priority rankings also take into account roadside land use (e.g. residential, agricultural, forest, etc.), road crash rates, road topography, and transportation demands along a given route (i.e. households with no cars, access to schools, shopping, recreational facilities, heavy truck use, etc.). The regional plan priority ratings also incorporate a measure called bicycle level of service (LOS), a concept based on the Federal Highway Administration's vehicle level of service, which gauges operational road conditions based on motor vehicle volume and road capacity. The bicycle level of service has yet to be explicitly defined, but it can be thought of as a barometer of cyclists' comfort, convenience and freedom to maneuver along a given stretch of road. Cycling LOS grades of A indicate an extremely high cycling suitability and LOS grades of F indicate extremely low cycling suitability. LOS grades are correlated to BCI compatibility levels. Roads with LOS grades of C or better (equivalent to BCI scores of 3.40 or lower), which correspond to moderately high cycling compatibilities or better, are deemed the minimum standard for cycling suitability.

In effect, BRPC prioritized a road's cycling development potential according to its demand and condition, with roads in high demand and poor cycling condition ranking highest in development priority. In other words, roads with higher BCI scores—*lower* bike compatibility—and heavier demand generally get *higher* development priority in the regional bike plan. The following table (Table 1) shows the cycling priority rankings for all roads in the North Becket Village. These are based on traffic, census, land use and other data, and they provided only a preliminary sorting of cycling development priorities for Becket roads. BRPC used this initial sorting for field checking purposes. The final recommendations in this report rely only in part on these initial priority rankings and in part on field observations and residents' comments and concerns.

Table 1. Cycling Priority Rankings for Selected North Becket Village Roads

MHD County Serial Number	Street Name	Residet.	Comm.	ACCIDENT	SLOPE 2 0	OTHER DESTS	PRKG	OCAR	SCHOOLS	BCI	LOS	Priorities
41200	PLEASANT STREET (High Street → mid-bend)	0.00	0.50	0	2	0.00	0.50	0	0.50	3.90	D	7.40
44400	LYMAN STREET (bend → Shaker Mill Brook)	0.50	0.00	0	2	0.00	0.50	0	0.50	3.18	C	6.68
41400	DEPOT STREET (All)	0.00	0.00	0	2	0.00	0.50	0	0.50	3.39	C	6.39
40900	HIGH STREET (Route 8 → Depot Street)	0.50	0.00	0	1	0.00	0.50	0	0.50	3.43	D	5.93
41300	PLEASANT STREET (mid-bend → dead end)	0.00	0.00	0	1	0.00	0.50	0	0.50	3.79	D	5.79
41500	PRENTICE PLACE (All)	0.00	0.00	0	2	0.00	0.50	0	0.50	2.63	C	5.63
40800	MAPLE STREET (mid-point → dead end)	0.50	0.00	0	1	0.00	0.50	0	0.50	3.09	C	5.59
41600	CARTER ROAD (Route 8 → Greenbrook Road)	0.00	0.00	0	1	0.00	0.50	0	0.50	3.32	C	5.32
40600	MAIN STREETN (N of Maple Street)	0.50	0.00	0	1	0.00	0.50	0	0.50	2.74	C	5.24
44300	LYMAN STREET (Route 8 → bend)	0.00	0.00	0	1	0.00	0.50	0	0.50	3.24	C	5.24
40700	MAPLE STREET (Main Street → mid-point)	0.00	0.00	0	1	0.00	0.50	0	0.50	3.09	C	5.09
40400	BROOKER HILL ROAD (Route 8 → Carter Road)	0.00	0.00	0	1	0.00	0.50	0	0.50	3.01	C	5.01
40500	MAIN STREET (Route 8 → Maple Street)	0.00	0.00	0	1	0.00	0.50	0	0.50	2.86	C	4.86
41100	LELAND STREET (All)	0.00	0.00	0	0	0.00	0.50	0	0.50	3.49	D	4.49
41000	HIGH STREET (N of Depot Street)	0.00	0.00	0	0	0.00	0.50	0	0.50	3.32	C	4.32
40000	ROUTE 8 (South of Prentice Place)	0.00	0.00	0	1	0.00	0.50	0	0.50	1.97	B	3.97
42100	BENTON HILL ROAD (All)	0.00	0.00	0	0	0.00	0.50	0	0.50	2.94	C	3.94
39900	ROUTE 8 (N of Prentice Place)	0.00	0.50	0	0	0.00	0.50	0	0.50	2.35	C	3.85

1.2 Cycling Compatibility Field Work

In spring 2003, BRPC staff visited Becket to survey the roads in Town that initially ranked highest and lowest in development priority. It was discovered that the preliminary BCI results of plugging existing data into the BCI formula (mostly MassHighway Road Inventory File, UMass Land Use and 2000 U.S. Census data) didn't always reflect all pertinent considerations for bike/ped development in more sparsely populated, rural areas. The field surveys were a means of considering conditions "on-the ground" and complemented the BCI formula by either validating the ratings or identifying other mitigating factors. In many of the rural areas and less densely populated areas, the analysis deviated slightly from the regional *Bicycling and Walking Plan's* development rankings in order to make recommendations that reflect real-world priorities and actual needs.

The following is a synopsis of BRPC's field reports for the North Becket Village, including a photograph of selected roads with cycling development potential. The alphanumeric codes in Table 1 above and in the parentheses after road names below are County Serial Numbers (CSNs) that identify specific segments of roads in Berkshire County, with each CSN corresponding to nearly fifty road-related measurements (primarily from the 2000 MassHighway Road Inventory File), including shoulder width, posted speed limit, roadside land use (based on a 1997 BRPC update of the UMass Land Use survey), roadside parking and other cycling-relevant parameters. The text accompanying the photographs describes BRPC impressions and observations about cycling-specific factors for each road in question. These real-world observations were used for the regional bike/ped plan to validate the initial, BCI-based ranking of cycling development priorities for roads throughout Berkshire County, including those in Tyringham.

Methodology:

The field observations and analysis is based on the following considerations:

- The width of the sidewalks and shoulders
- The approximate Curb Lane Width (CLW) of the road
- The speed limit
- Traffic volume on the road
- If the road section has primarily commercial or residential development
- Whether or not there is parking in the shoulder of the road
- The width of the road in number of lanes

According to the BCI formula, most of the highest ranked roads in Becket were small side streets. BRPC Staff checked some of these small roads, but also took notes on Rte. 8, which was not ranked as a high priority road. The field observer noted that the conditions on most of Rte. 8 appeared very dangerous to cyclists and pedestrians, yet during the short field visit the observer noted numerous people (approximately 6 bikers and 6 walkers) biking and walking along it. The observer noted that most

Becket roads, with the exception of Rte. 8 and Rte. 20, were fairly quiet roads that don't regularly carry much traffic. The observer noted that what heavy traffic does flow through Becket is generally contained to those major roads.

The following items are observations from the field survey on selected roads in and around the North Becket Village area.

Becket (CSN 43400) YMCA Rd.

Rt. 8 ↔ Hamilton Rd



The speed limit on this road is 25 mph, although field research would suggest that people generally are not obeying the speed limit in this area. There are no sidewalks or shoulders, and the CLW is rather narrow (approximately 11 feet), which poses a danger to bikers and pedestrians. The road is also rather hilly and curvy, which poses an additional threat to bikers who might not be seen by motorists due to the terrain.

Photo 1: YMCA Rd in Becket

YMCA Rd. ↔ Beaver Creek Farm and Sugar House

This curvy section of Rt. 8 is busy with car traffic traveling at 30 mph to 45 mph. There are 1-foot shoulders on both sides of the road, and while field research was being conducted there were many (approximately 12) people walking and biking along it. Despite the significant number of cyclists and pedestrians on this road, the shoulders are not wide enough for people to walk or bike safely. Due to number of people that already use this road for cycling and walking and the fact the road does connect to the Village area this road would be good potential candidate for cycling and pedestrian improvements.



Photo 2: Rt. 8 with bikers in the narrow shoulder

Becket (CSN 34600) McNerney Rd.

Brooker Hill Rd ↔ County Rd



The speed limit on this section of McNerney Rd. is 30 mph. There is a 2-foot shoulder on both sides and no sidewalk on either side. It is hilly and curvy, making it dangerous for walkers and bikers because motorists may not be able to see them due to these visual obstacles.

Photo 3: McNerney Rd,
2-foot shoulder

Becket (CSN 40900) High Street

Rt. 8 ↔ Depot St.

This section is a priority section because it is a residential street close to the downtown. There is no speed limit posted on it, but the smallness of the road would suggest that it is 25 mph. There is a 5-foot wide sidewalk on the south side of the street for the first half of the segment (closest to Rt. 8) and for the second half there are no sidewalks. There are no shoulders on either side of the road on either half of the section. This road climbs up a rather steep hill and has a rather narrow CLW (approximately 11 feet), which makes it more dangerous for bikers and pedestrians. This road has good connectivity to the Village area and this small stretch of road may also merit consideration for potential bicycling enhancements.



Photo 4: High street, looking west down hill

1.3 Walking Compatibility

There is no systematic index, like the Federal Highway Administration's BCI, to determine local walking development priorities in towns. There are, however, many well-established, common sense measures for making pedestrian travel safer and more pleasant. The first among these is sidewalks, or some equivalent walking path separate from the vehicular right-of-way. Other measures include traffic calming devices such as crosswalks, pedestrian crossing signage, pavement markings and speed limit reductions. Other specific recommendations for making the Village area more pedestrian friendly are included in the economic development section of this plan (see 6-1)

Through the planning process local residents expressed an interest in extending sidewalks or designated walking paths within and beyond the Village center, primarily so that younger and older members of the community—or residents without regular access to motor vehicles—can safely and enjoyably walk from one residence to another or into town and back. It was mentioned that the stretch from the North Becket Cemetery on Route 8 to McNerny Road is particularly treacherous for walkers and should be considered a priority for pedestrian facility improvements. Another key consideration for extending pedestrian facilities within the Village area is to provide locals, visitors and children with safe and easy connections between the numerous cultural, residential, recreational and commercial venues located in the Village. The fact that the North Becket Village is bisected by a major state highway with no traffic signals, few cautionary signs and no crosswalks and is heavily traveled by speeding cars, can make just walking from one side of the street to the other a potential hazard.

Alternatives to sidewalks or road-related pedestrian network enhancements, such as off-road walking trails or multi-use paths were also considered during the planning process. There are a number of natural and recreational attractions within easy walking distance of the Village area. Many of the attractions are already accessible to walkers through a system of informal, undesignated and sometimes unsafe trails. In a number of cases these informal trails traverse private property, which is tolerated but not sanctioned by the property owners. None of the informal trails are marked or universally accessible. Some of the informal trails have improvised parking available at or near the trailhead, others have no apparent parking available. All of the informal trails appear to be improvised and none have been groomed, graded, surfaced or regularly maintained. They are typically not of sufficient width to provide for comfortable walking for persons traveling in tandem or often even single file. As noted above, some of these trails could even be described as unsafe for the feeble or uninitiated.

Much of the public discussion revolved around identifying, formalizing and improving the existing network of undesignated trails. There was also consideration of extending some the undesignated trails and ultimately linking the trails to other established trails in the region. Three primary concepts for trails or other pedestrian facilities emerged from the discussion: 1) Shaker Mill Brook Access Trail, 2) Fisherman's Trail (to access Depot Brook) and 3) a pedestrian bridge over Yokum Brook connecting Main Street with a municipal park. Each of these concepts is discussed in greater detail below.

1.4 Walking Trail Proposals

It is anticipated that all of the trails discussed below will be primarily for walking/hiking and perhaps open to some types of bike travel (e.g. mountain bikes). Trails used for walking only are typically 6'-8' wide. Combined walking and bike use trails are typically 8'-10' in width and multi-use trails 10'-12'. Another expectation is that the

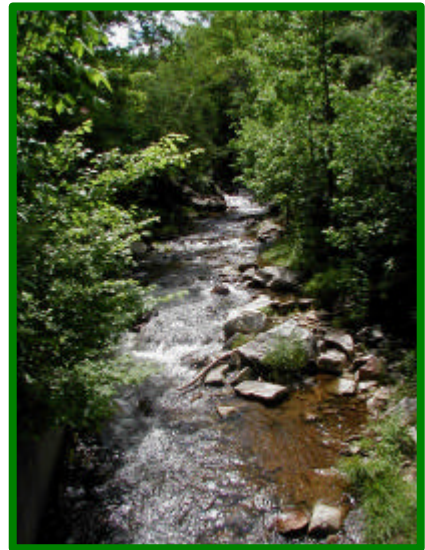
proposed trails would be properly graded, compacted, surfaced and constructed for universal accessibility. Proposed trail facility design would include marked trailheads, designated parking and respective signage. All specific trail design considerations would be determined through future planning design of a selected trail proposal. Each proposal has unique opportunities and challenges that are discussed below. One challenge common to all the proposals is that a significant level of environmental review and permitting is likely to be required since all of the proposals are in close proximity to protected water resources.

Shaker Mill Brook Access Trail

This trail proposal has three options and is intended to provide residents and visitors with safe pedestrian access to views of the ravine at Shaker Mill Brook, the natural whirlpool and fishing. A map depicting the proposed trails and options is attached as Attachment 1.

Option I

The ravine is currently accessible by an improvised trail that commences at a half-acre parcel of municipally-owned property on Brook Hill Road approximately 1,000' west of the intersection of Brooker Hill Rd and Washington Street. There is also a small improvised parking area at the trail entrance that can accommodate 3-4 vehicles. The narrow, improvised trail winds down a steep slope for approximately 100' to the ravine. During wet conditions the trail is fairly treacherous. As noted on the Proposed Trail Map (Attachment 1) this option would commence at the rear of the Mullen House Property following directly adjacent to Brooker Hill Road to the west for approximately 1000' and then connecting with the existing improvised trail. Due to the fact that this trail lies completely within public property, this is the most likely area to establish a formal trail. However, this site has two significant challenges. The first challenge is that the trail is on a steep slope and would probably require a number of switchbacks that would add considerably to the cost of the project. The second challenges is that the slope has suffered serious erosion which has destabilized portions of the trail and an area of Brooker Hill Road right above the trail. It is likely that a tremendous amount of excavation, grading and a series of retaining walls would be necessary to ensure that the trail would be structurally sound. The anticipated cost of this option could be prohibitive. See trial SM -1 in Attachment 1.



Option II

This option is not based on an existing trail. The trail would commence at the rear of the Mullen House Property and head 850' straight west through the woods to the ravine and whirlpool area. It would parallel the trail proposed in Option I, but this trail would travel off-road through the surrounding woods rather than on the road, as proposed in Option 1. This is the most desirable option from a community

perspective because it would provide the most natural and direct linkage between the proposed Mullen House Education Center and the destination at the ravine . The Education Center proponents envisions the trail as an interpretive environmental educational tool (e.g. for nature walks and tours of the area ecology). The primary challenge of this option is that the majority of the trail traverses private property, and the owner has been outspoken in his opposition to this trail being formalized and has indicated an unwillingness to grant a necessary easement for the trail. An improvised trail that exists nearby on the same property is currently frequented by locals and it appears that the property owner is a part-time resident who is unable to actively deter trespassers. It was also indicated that some visitors using the trail have left trash and debris and even the vandalized property. See SM-2 on Attachment 1.

Fisherman's Trail

The proposed trail consists of two distinct segments. The first segment is an existing improvised trail that begins at the end of Depot Street and heads west for about 150' across the railroad tracks and down to the banks of the Depot Brook which is a locally recognized fishing area frequented in the spring and summer months. The initial segment of the trail would be approximately 2500' long, following the creek bank from the Becket/Washington border south to the confluence with the West Branch of the Westfield River (see FT-1 on Attachment 1). The second leg of the trail would begin at the end of Pleasant Road heading down to the Westfield River, traveling southeastward parallel to the banks of the of Westfield River for approximately 5.5 miles, passing a local swimming area and ultimately connecting with the Granite Bridge/Keystone Arches Trail in the Town of Chester. The proposed trail would have designated parking in proximity to the two entry points (see Attachment 1). The first trailhead and parking area will be located at the terminus of Depot Street. The second trailhead and parking area will be just to the northwest of tThe final parking and trailhead area will be at the terminus of Pleasant Road and will provide access near the swimming area.

The primary challenge to this proposed trail is that it traverses several pieces of private property that would require the negotiation of numerous easements. The proposal also calls for extending the trail into another municipality (Washington), which would require a commitment of long-term inter-municipal cooperation with regard to building and maintaining the trail. The trail also is in close proximity to an active rail line and could pose some dangers, particularly to unsupervised children. Finally this trail is extremely ambitious in scope, and the anticipated costs would be very substantial. A more modest, phased proposal for this trail would be more viable. For example, the first phase could focus on a truncated trail extending only from the Becket/Washington border to the Depot Creek/ Westfield River confluence.

Yokum Brook Walking Bridge

This proposed improvement would provide a direct pedestrian connection between Main Street in the Village to the municipal park on the east bank of Yokum Brook. Currently, the park must be accessed from the south near the entrance of Becket-Washington School or from the north near the railroad depot. Both of the routes are

circuitous and inconvenient for persons seeking access to or from the Village Area. The brook also poses an attractive nuisance for children entering or leaving the park who want to take a short cut through the brook. It was suggested that walking bridge be covered for aesthetic purpose and to highlight the historic background of the village.



The primary challenges to this proposal are cost and permitting issues. Depending on the structural design and the materials that the bridge is constructed of, the costs could be very significant. The amount of environmental review and permitting would also be significant for a project of this nature. One way that design and construction costs could be reduced would be to have work done by volunteers and volunteer groups. The Town of Sheffield constructed a replica of a historic covered bridge and the work was done primarily by volunteers.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The planning process—including the collection and analysis of relevant data and information, review and discussion of information with the Advisory Committee, and public discussion of findings—has resulted in the following issues, goals and recommendations for developing bicycling and pedestrian improvements in the North Becket Village Area:

2.1 Cycling Recommendations

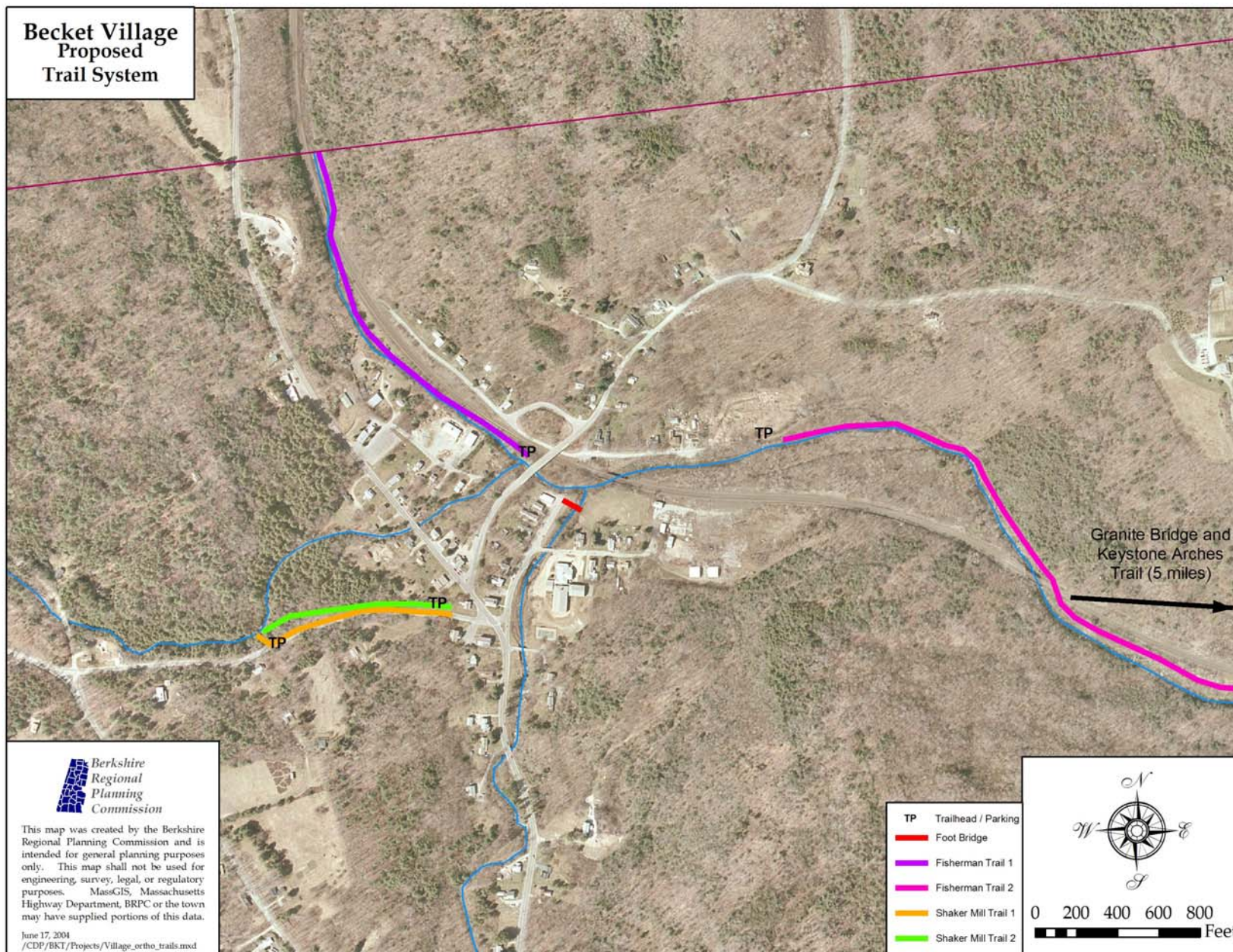
- ❑ Consider Bicycling safety enhancements (cycling signage, shoulder upgrades, pavement marking upgrades) for the following areas in and approaching the Village Area:
 - o YMCA Road from Rte. 8 to Hamilton Road
 - o Route 8 from YMCA Road to Beaver Creek Farm
 - o McNerney Road from Brooker Hill Road to County Road
 - o High Street from Route 8 to Depot Street
- ❑ Consider installing bike racks in a central location in the Village—ideally, the Mullen House Education Center site.
- ❑ Work with regional organizations, such as the Berkshire Bike Path Council, to identify and apply for funding to implement proposed enhancements.
- ❑ Work with regional organizations, such as the Berkshire Bike Path Council, to explore potential linkages to the established regional bicycling trail network.

2.2 Walking Recommendations

- ❑ Extend sidewalk network in Village area
- ❑ Enhance pedestrian safety on Route 8 from the North Becket Cemetery to McNerney Road by extending sidewalk or developing a walking path.
- ❑ Coordinate with local and regional stakeholder groups to refine and prioritize identified walking trail proposals.
- ❑ Determine or assign a lead group to coordinate trail development and implementation efforts.
- ❑ Visit other area trails to determine what key design features and accessory facilities are necessary and desirable.
- ❑ For trails proposals that have been identified as requiring easements, approach property owners to determine willingness to cooperate.
- ❑ Seek funding from the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Recreational Trails program and other sources for advanced planning, design and implementation of trail network.

See the *Proposed Bicycling and Walking Improvements* map on the following page for an overview of the recommendations.

Becket Village Proposed Trail System



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN TOWN OF BECKET



GIS Maps

GIS Mapping

Introduction to GIS Mapping
Introduction to Development Suitability Maps
Base Maps

8

8-1
8-2
8-8

Introduction to GIS Mapping

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are quickly becoming a staple of our times. Defined broadly, GIS is a computer-based system “for capture, retrieval, analysis, and display of spatial (locationally defined) data.” The essential elements in this definition for local governments are “spatial” and “analysis”: where are things, why do we want to know about them, and how can our community use this information to make better decisions?

GIS is a system of computer software, hardware, data, and personnel to help manipulate, analyze and present information that is tied to a specific location on the earth. Aspects of GIS include:

Spatial location – usually a geographic location

Information – visualization of analysis of data

System – linking software, hardware, data

Personnel –the key to the power of GIS

GIS applies modern computer graphics and database technology to the efficient, cost-effective management and planning of the local government's assets. It provides enhanced capabilities for data storage, retrieval, and analysis. GIS does this by linking (1) maps and (2) databases. This marriage lets us easily explore the relationship between (1) location and (2) information.

The real key for small city governments is that GIS quickly integrates *information with location*. Through its use of computer technology, GIS provides a better, faster, easier way for local officials to find answers to questions and carry out analyses based on spatial relationships.

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission uses GIS in projects covering almost all aspects of planning. This includes environmental, land use, community development, transportation, economic and housing projects. BRPC uses our GIS for map creation, data development and spatial analysis.

Throughout the Community Development Plan, GIS has been used to create a series of base maps illustrating what is in each community and has allowed community officials to determine where the most suitable locations are for various types of development / preservation. Some communities also used suitability maps to assist them in determine where the best locations for development / preservation were. These suitability maps were created by evaluating the importance of various environmental, housing, economic, and transportation items and plotting the best and worst locations based on the combination of all these factors. The final maps presented throughout the report show the decisions that were arrived at by the community. In this section, the base maps are presented as reference to show what is currently in the town. The descriptions of the mapped items that you will find within these base maps are listed below.

Introduction to Development Suitability Maps

Description of Map Attributes

Environmental Resources

Drinking Water

Aquifers – shows medium and high yield aquifers as delineated by USGS Water Resource Division. The original data is from the USGS 1:48,000 hydrologic atlas series on groundwater favorability.

Interim Wellhead Protection areas – shows the primary, protected area for PWS groundwater sources in the absence of an approved Zone II. The radius around the well is determined by the pumping rate in GPM of the well. Wellhead protection areas are important for protecting the recharge area around public water supply (PWS) wells.

Lakes/Ponds Resource Area – shows a 100 ft. buffer around the lakes and ponds that are on the USGS topographical maps. This buffer shows the area that has an immediate impact of the lakes and ponds.

Outstanding Resource Water – shows waters which constitute an outstanding resource as determined by their outstanding socioeconomic, recreational, ecological, and / or aesthetic values and which shall be protected and maintained as determined under Massachusetts Surface Water Quality Standards of 1995

Wellhead Protection Zone I – shows a 400 ft. buffer around public water supply points.

Wellhead Protection Area Zone II – shows the primary, protected area for PWS groundwater sources based upon the area of an aquifer which contributes to a well under the most severe pumping and recharge conditions that can realistically be anticipated. Wellhead protection areas are important for protecting the recharge area around public water supply (PWS) wells.

Water Bodies and Protection Areas

FEMA 100yr. Floodplain – shows areas of possible risk associated with flooding. This layer was created by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) from the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM)

Lakes / Ponds Resource Areas – 100 ft - shows a 100-foot buffer around lakes and ponds that defines the resource area that contributes to the lake/pond. The lakes and ponds are derived from USGS topo maps.

River Protection Area – 200 ft. – Shows a 200-foot buffer delineating the resource area of perennial streams. These areas were created as an addition to the long-standing Wetlands Protection Act. The law establishes protected riverfront areas that extend 200 feet from the mean annual high-water line.

Surface Water Protection Area Zone A – shows land between the surface water source and the upper boundary of the bank, the land within a 400 foot lateral distance from the upper boundary of the bank of a Class A surface water source and the land within a 200 foot lateral distance from the upper boundary of the bank of a tributary or associated surface water body. These areas are included in the Massachusetts Drinking Water Regulations as Surface Water Supply Protection Zones.

Surface Water Protection Area Zone B – shows the land within one-half mile of the upper boundary of the bank of a Class A surface water source or the edge of the watershed, whichever is less. Zone B always included the land area within a 400 ft lateral distance from the upper boundary of the bank of the Class A surface water source. These areas are included in the Massachusetts Drinking Water Regulations as Surface Water Supply Protection Zones.

Wetland Resource Areas – shows a 100-foot buffer around wetlands that defines the resource area that contributes to the wetland. The wetlands are derived from USGS topographical maps.

Wetlands – shows wetlands derived from USGS topographical maps.

Soils / Geology

Excessively Drained Soils– shows soils that have too much or too rapid loss of water, either by percolation or by surface flow. The occurrence of internal free water is very rare or very deep. This layer was derived from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) database.

Highly Erodible Soils – shows soils that are highly susceptible to erosion from wind and/or water. This layer was derived from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) database.

Hydric Soils – Soils that are wet long enough to periodically produce anaerobic conditions, thereby influencing the growth of plants. This layer was derived from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) database.

Poorly Drained soils– shows soils that do not lose water very rapidly. The occurrence of free water is common. This layer was derived from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) database.

Scenic Landscapes – shows areas identified as having distinctive or noteworthy scenic landscapes as part of the Massachusetts Landscape Inventory Project, Department of Environmental Management, 1981.

Slopes Greater than 15% - shows slopes that are greater than 15% based on slope information derived from either 3 or 10-meter contours generated by MassGIS

Biological

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern – shows the location of areas that have been designated ACECs by the Secretary of Environmental Affairs. This designation requires greater environmental review of certain kinds of proposed development under state agency jurisdiction with the boundary.

Contiguous Natural Lands – shows large, contiguous tracts of natural land. “Contiguous” lands are defined to be at least 250 contiguous acres and “Natural” lands are defined based on the land use codes for water, forest, shrubland, pasture and wetland. The data is part of the Massachusetts Resource Identification Project (MRIP).

Natural Land Riparian Corridors – shows contiguous natural lands within a 100-meter corridor encompassing perennial streams and river features. These areas within the riparian corridor remain in a “natural state”, potentially functioning as a corridor for select species movement, as well as additional ecological purposes. These data is part of the Massachusetts Resource Identification Project (MRIP).

NHESP BioMap Core Habitat - Depicts the most viable habitat for rare species and natural communities. The polygons may consist of many individual species or natural communities.

NHESP BioMap Supporting Natural Landscapes – buffers and connects the Core Habitat polygons and identifies large, naturally vegetated blocks that are relatively free from the impact of roads and other development. The quality of undeveloped land considered in the landscape analysis was evaluated based on four major components: natural vegetation patch characteristics, size of relatively road less areas, sub watershed integrity, and contribution to buffering Bore Habitat for plants and exemplary communities.

NHESP Estimated Habitats of Rare Wildlife – shows estimations of the habitats of state-protected rare wildlife populations that occur in Resource areas. These habitats are based on rare species records maintained in the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program’s (NHESP) database.

NHESP Priority Habitats of Rare Species – shows areas that represent estimations of important state-listed rare species habitats in Massachusetts. These habitats are based in rare species population records maintained in the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program’s (NHESP) database.

Riparian Corridors – shows a 100-meter corridor, which encompasses perennial streams and river features. The 100 meter buffer distance is a subjective value derived from existing conservation plans, as well as current literature. The data is part of the Massachusetts Resource Identification Project (MRIP).

Vernal Pools – shows a 100-foot buffer around NHESP Certified Vernal Pools. Certified Vernal Pools are protected if they fall under the jurisdiction of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act Regulations. They also are afforded protection under the state Water Quality Certification regulations, the state Title 5 regulations, and the Forest Cutting Practices Act regulations.

Community

Developed

Commercial Land – shows land that is classified as commercial in the most recent land use update.

Gravel Pits / Mining - shows land that is classified as Gravel / Mining in the most recent land use update.

Industrial Land – shows land that is classified as industrial in the most recent land use update. Industrial land is defined as Industrial, Mining, and Waste Disposal.

Multi-Family Residential - shows land that is classified as Multi-Family residential in the most recent land use update.

Residential Land – shows land that is classified as residential in the most recent land use update. Residential land is defined as lots smaller than ¼ acre lots, ¼ to ½ acre lots, lots larger than ½ acre, and multi-family lots.

State Registered Historic Resources – shows land that is listed with the State Register of Historic Places as being of historical interest.

Village / Commercial Centers – an area defined by the community as representing the village or community center.

Non-Developed Land

Agriculture Land – shows land classified as agriculture in the most recent land use update. Land that is defined as agriculture is composed of cropland, pasture, and woody perennial.

Agricultural Preservation Restriction Land – shows land that is permanently protected as agricultural land due to an APR designation

Buildable Land – shows land that was determined to be buildable based upon existing development, protection, and restricted land during the 1999/2000 Buildout Analysis

Forested Land – shows land that is classified as forest in the most recent land use update.

Non-Protected Open Space – shows land that is classified as open space, but is not permanently protected.

Partial Constraints – shows land that is buildable but is limited based on land characteristics, such as slope, wetlands, and proximity to water.

Protected Open Space – shows land that is classified as open space and is permanently protected.

Recreational Resources – shows land that is classified as recreational in the most recent land use update. Recreational land is defined as Participation Recreation, Spectator Recreation and Water based Recreation.

Housing and Population Densities

Owner Housing Density – The percentage of housing that is owned by the resident on a per acre basis. The values are derived from the Census 2000 data.

Population Density - The population of the census block on a per acre basis. The values are derived from the Census 2000 data.

Rental Housing Density - The percentage of housing that is rented by the resident on a per acre basis. The values are derived from the Census 2000 data.

Seasonal Housing Density - The percentage of housing that is seasonal on a per acre basis. The values are derived from the Census 2000 data.

Infrastructure

Roads

Dirt / Unpaved Roads – roads that are considered dirt or unpaved based on the latest MassHighway inventory.

Local Roads – roads that are considered local roads based on the latest MassHighway inventory.

Minor Roads – roads that are considered collectors based on the latest MassHighway inventory.

Major Roads / Highway Access – roads that are considered arterials or interstate on the latest MassHighway inventory.

Other Transportation

Para Transit – This data layer is only useful for regional analysis. A town that is a member of BRTA receives para transit

Transit access – roads that have existing BRTA bus service.

Rail Access – existing rail lines that are currently used.

Air Access – the area surrounding the airports that are considered part of the airport complex.

Bike Trails – the Ashuwillticook bike trail from Lanesborough/Pittsfield line to downtown Adams.

Utilities

Public Water – a line approximating the location of the public water lines. DPW staff verified this data during the summer of 2001.

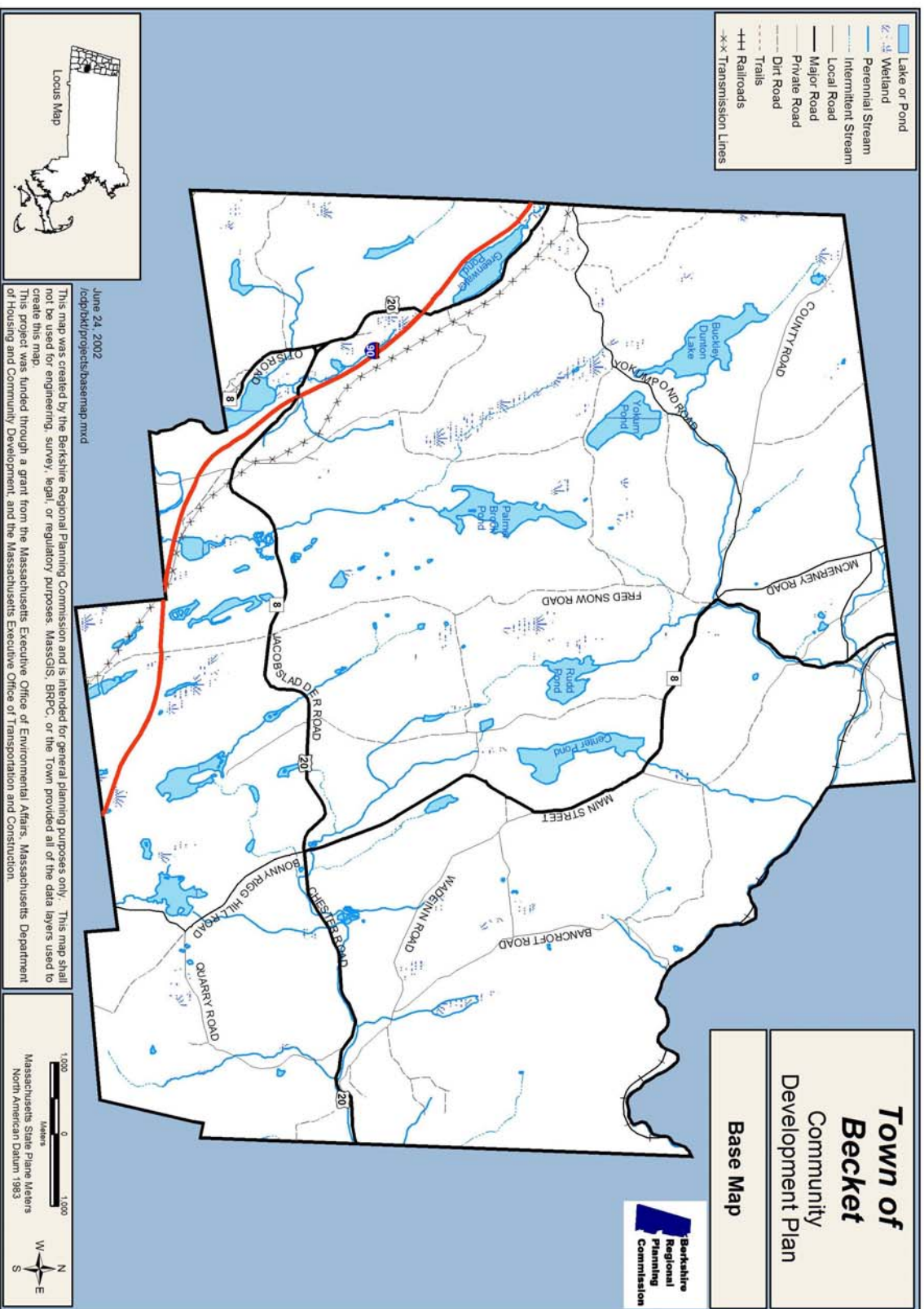
Sewer – a line approximating the location of the sewer lines. The DPW staff verified this data during summer of 2001.

Solid Waste Facilities – Compiled by DEP to track the locations of landfills, transfer stations, and combustion facilities.

Bureau of Waste Prevention

Major Facilities – facilities that are regulated by the DEP. These are considered to have the greatest environmental significance. Facilities included are:

- Large Quantity Generators of Hazardous Waste
- Large Quantity Toxic Users
- Hazardous Waste Recyclers
- Hazardous Waste Treatment, Storage and / or Disposal Facilities
- Facilities with Air Operating Permits
- Facilities with Groundwater Discharge Permits



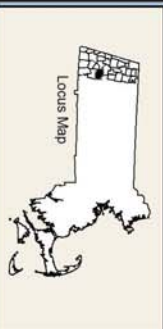
- Lake or Pond
- Wetland
- Perennial Stream
- Intermittent Stream
- Local Road
- Major Road
- Private Road
- Dirt Road
- Trails
- Railroads
- Transmission Lines

Town of Becket Community Development Plan

Base Map

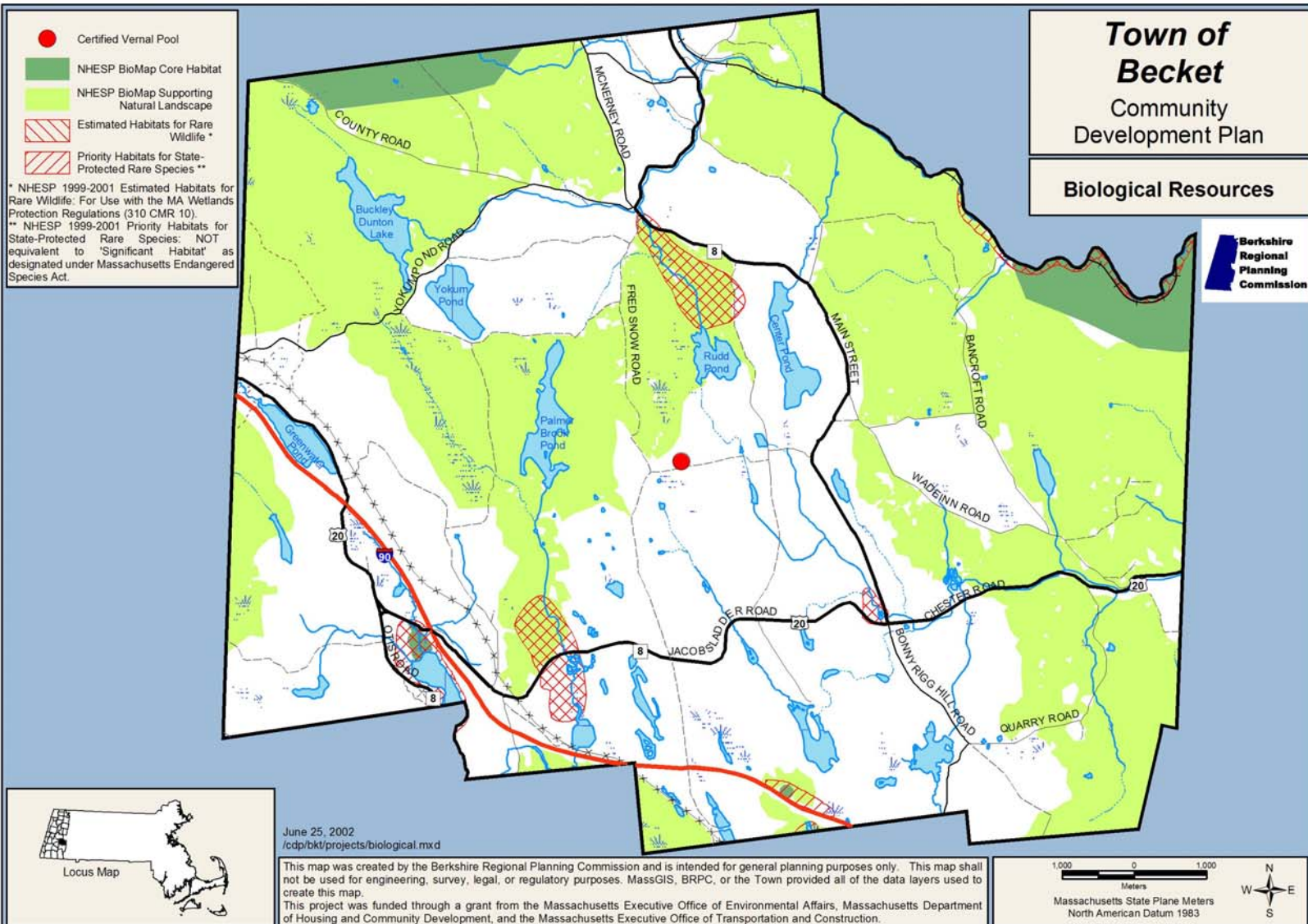


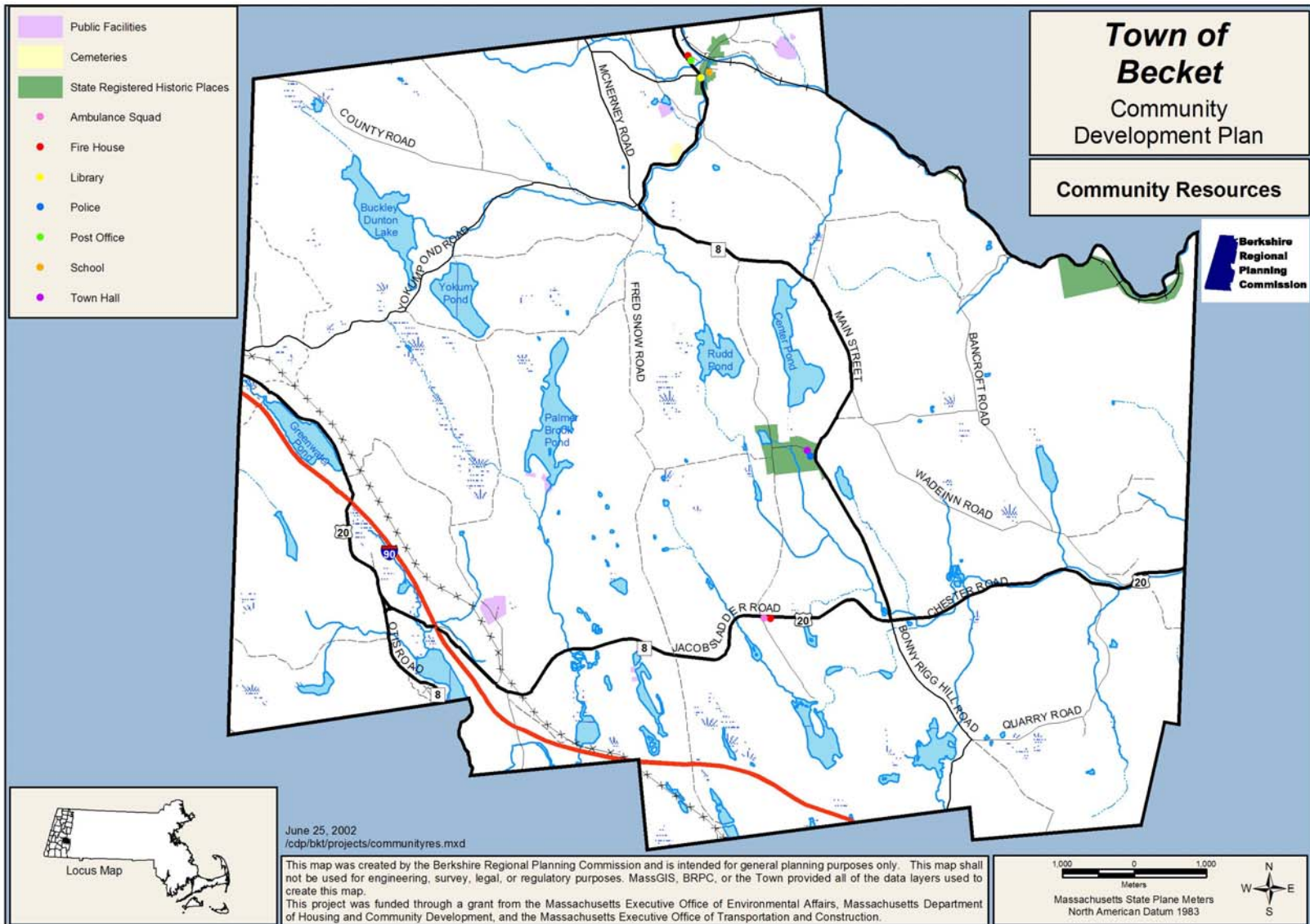
June 24, 2002
icdpbktproject\basemap.mxd
This map was created by the Berks Regional Planning Commission and is intended for general planning purposes only. This map shall not be used for engineering, survey, legal, or regulatory purposes. MassGIS, BRPC, or the Town provided all of the data layers used to create this map.
This project was funded through a grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation and Construction.

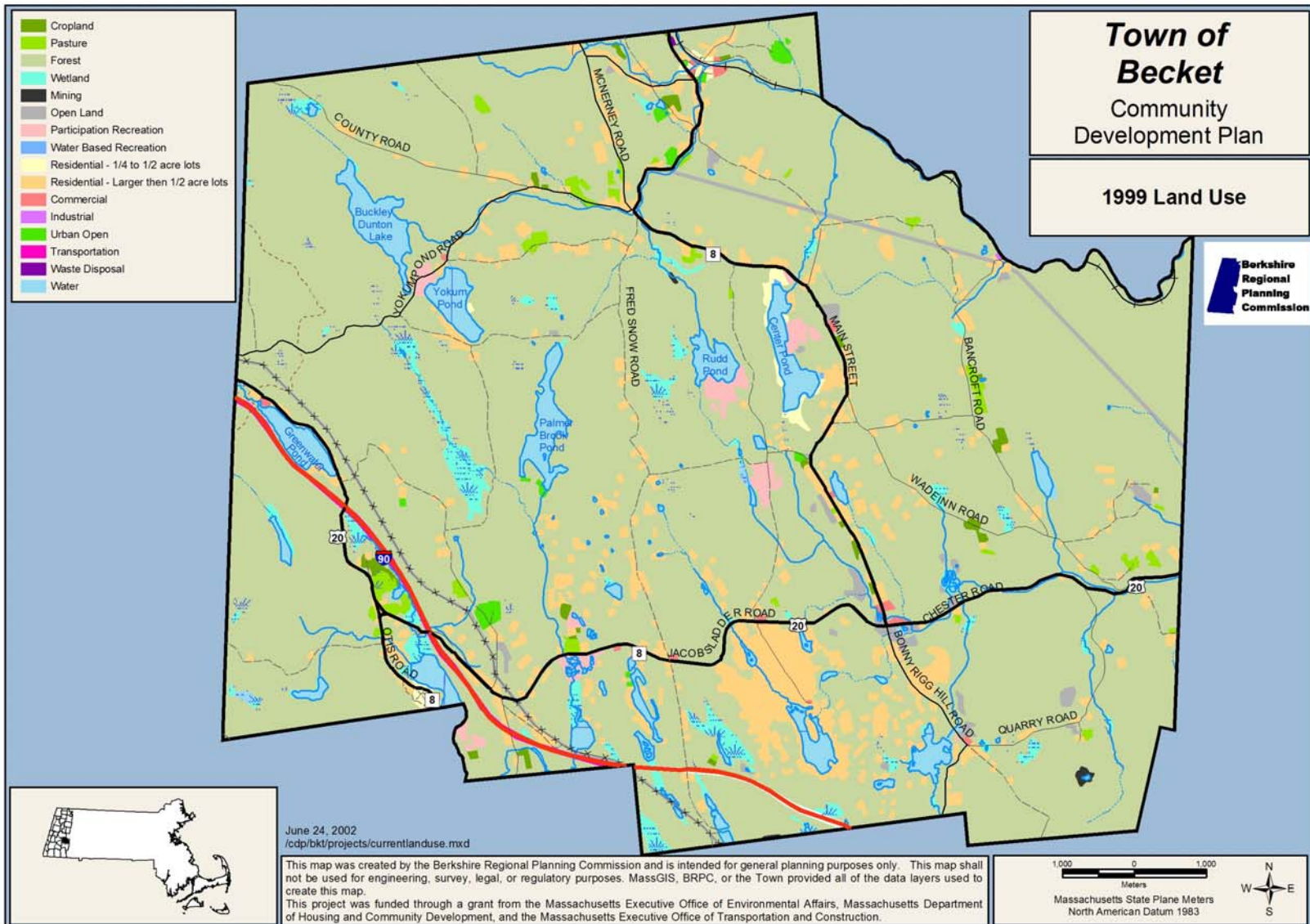


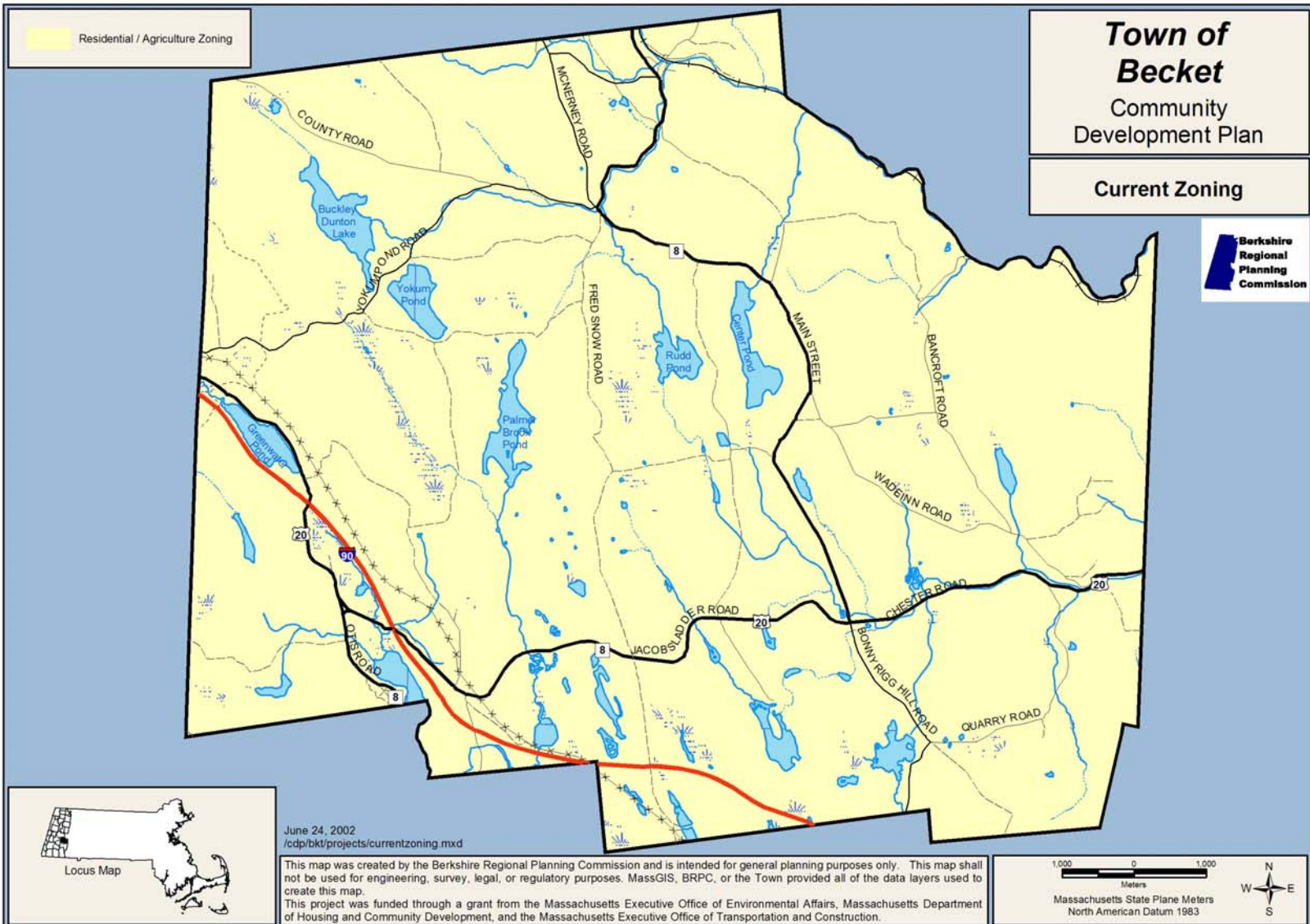
Town of Becket Community Development Plan

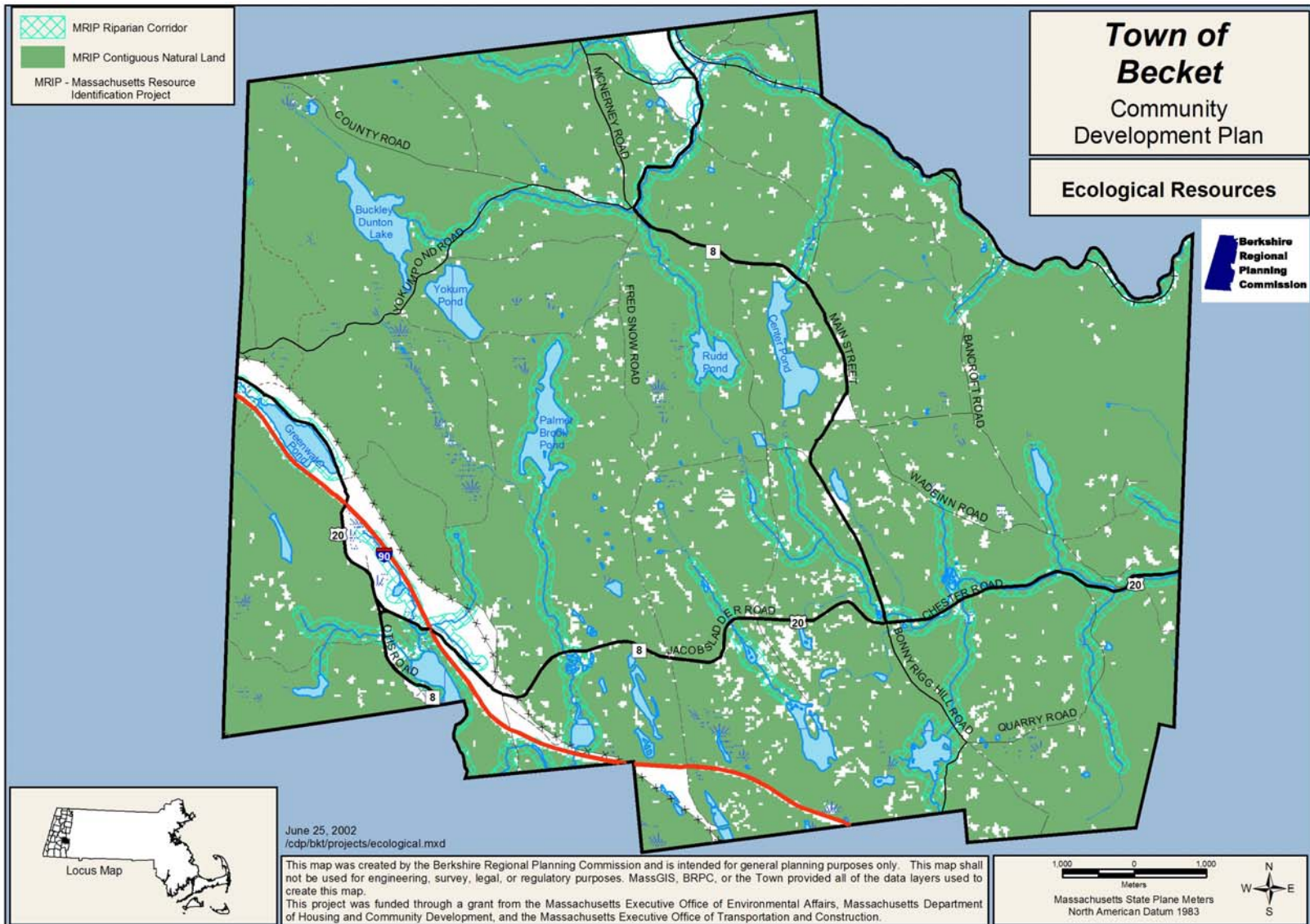
Biological Resources











Residential Lot Size

- 1/4 to 1/2 acre lots
- Larger then 1/2 acre lots

Town of Becket
Community Development Plan

Existing Housing



June 24, 2002
/cdp/bkt/projects/existinghousing.mxd

This map was created by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and is intended for general planning purposes only. This map shall not be used for engineering, survey, legal, or regulatory purposes. MassGIS, BRPC, or the Town provided all of the data layers used to create this map.

This project was funded through a grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation and Construction.

1,000 0 1,000
Meters

Massachusetts State Plane Meters
North American Datum 1983

Residential Lot Size

- 1/4 to 1/2 acre lots
- Larger then 1/2 acre lots

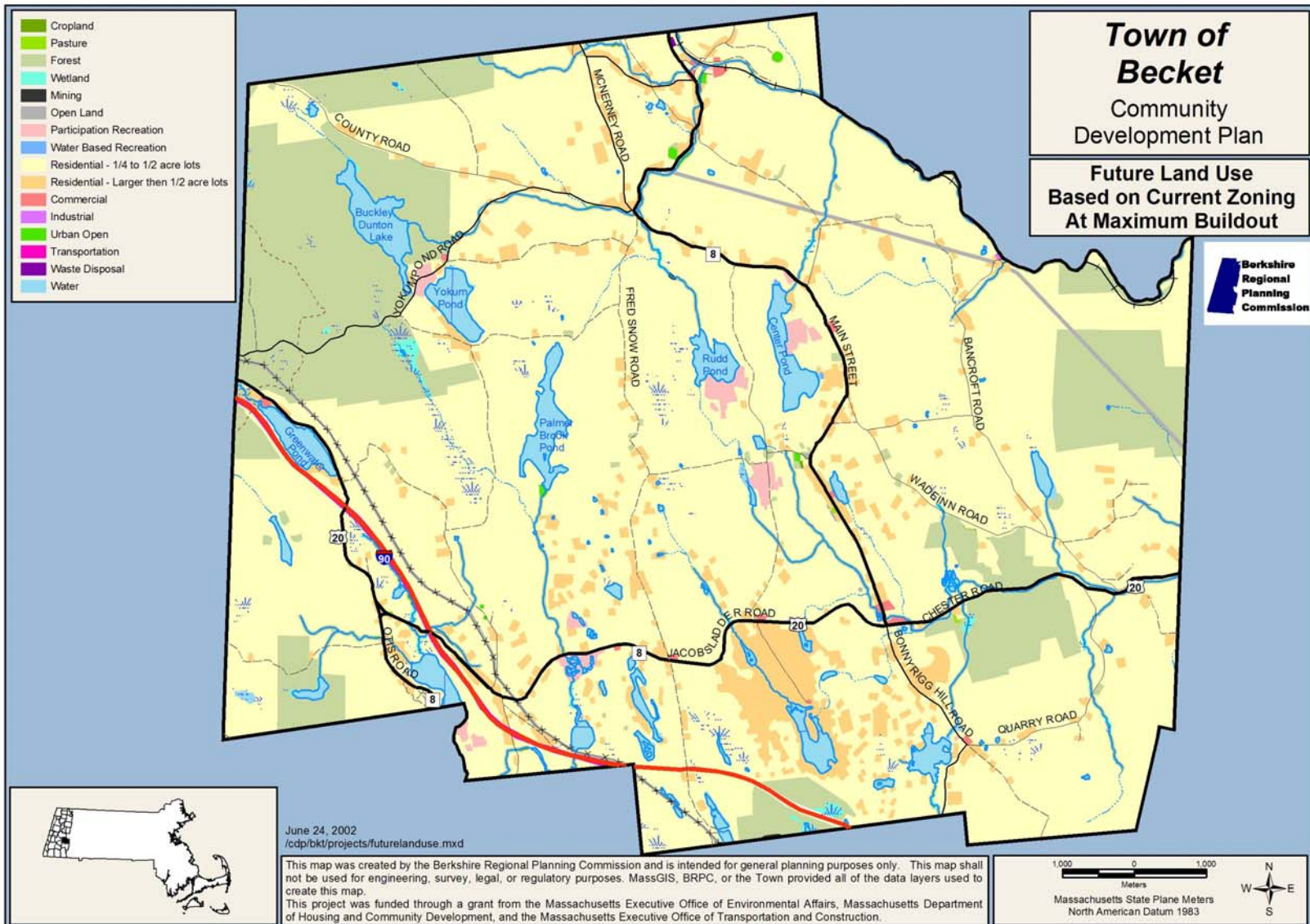
Town of Becket
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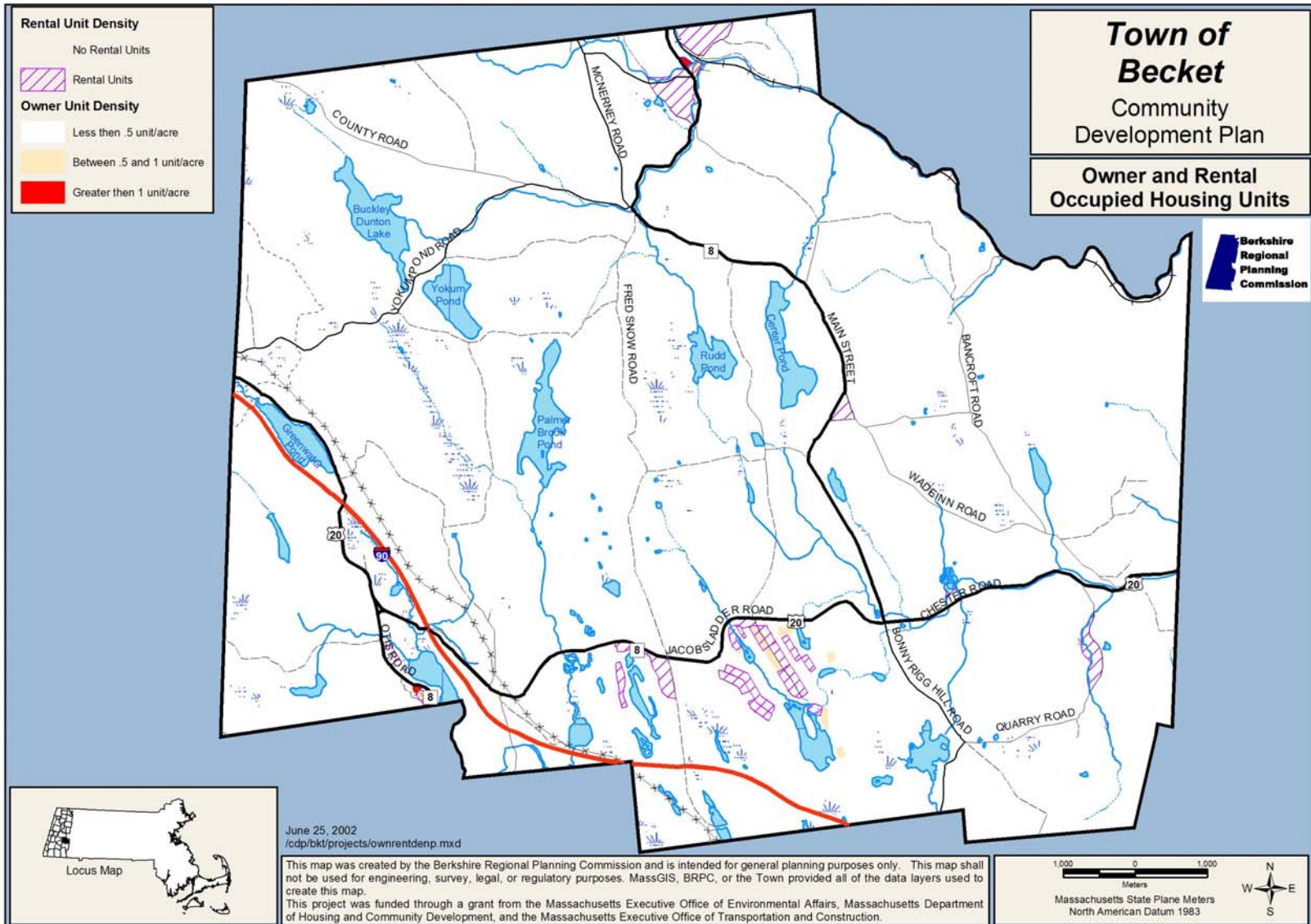


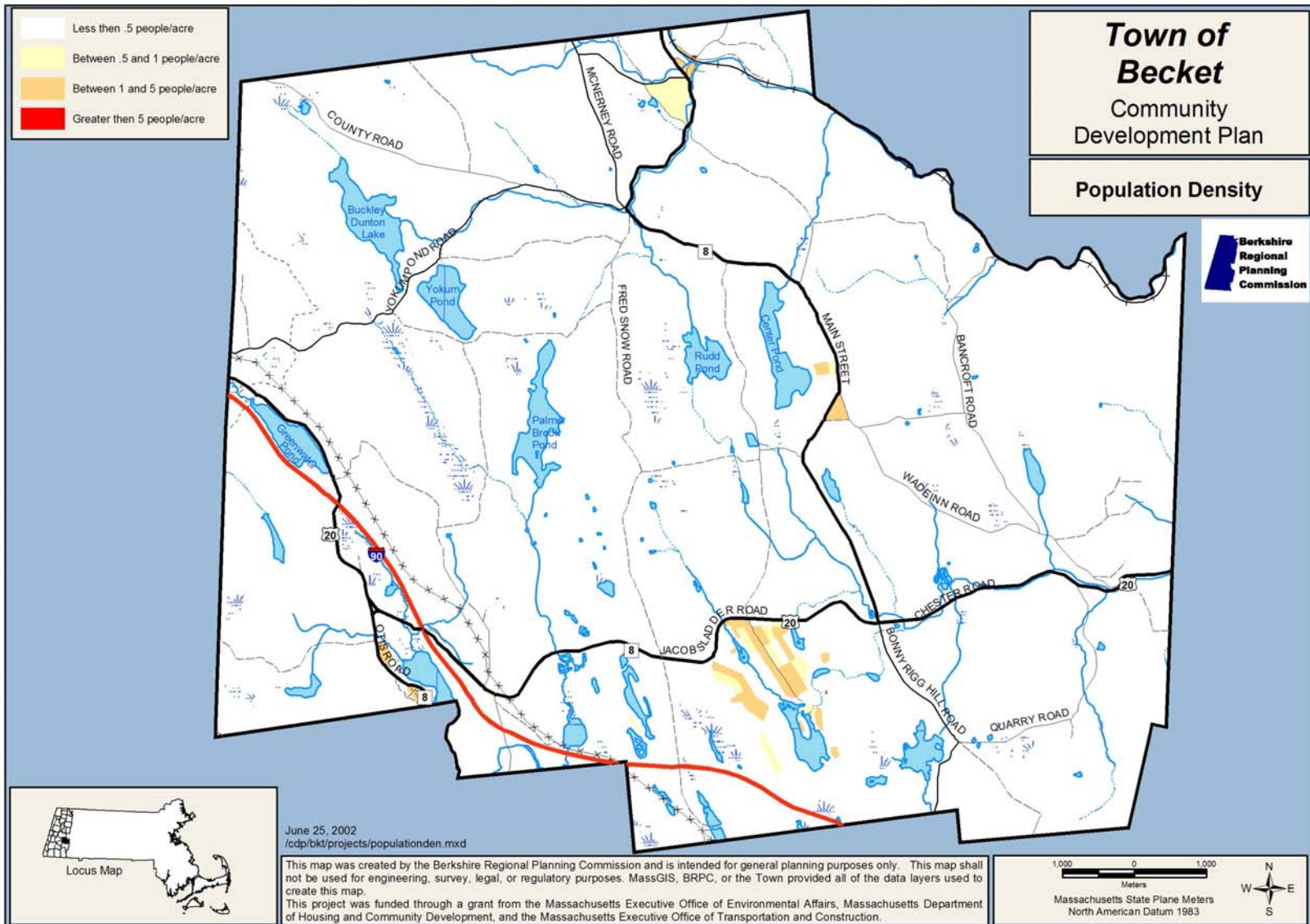
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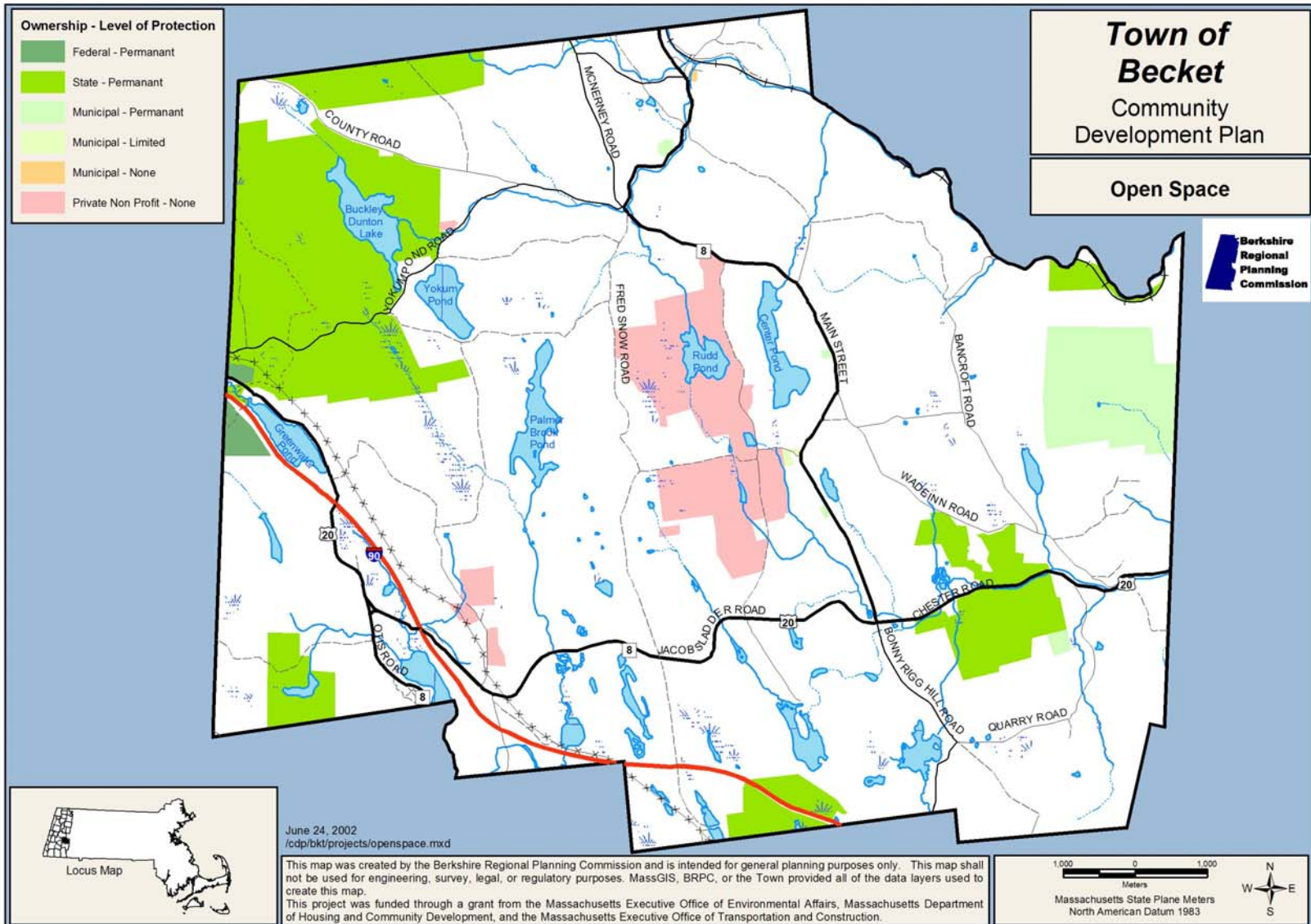
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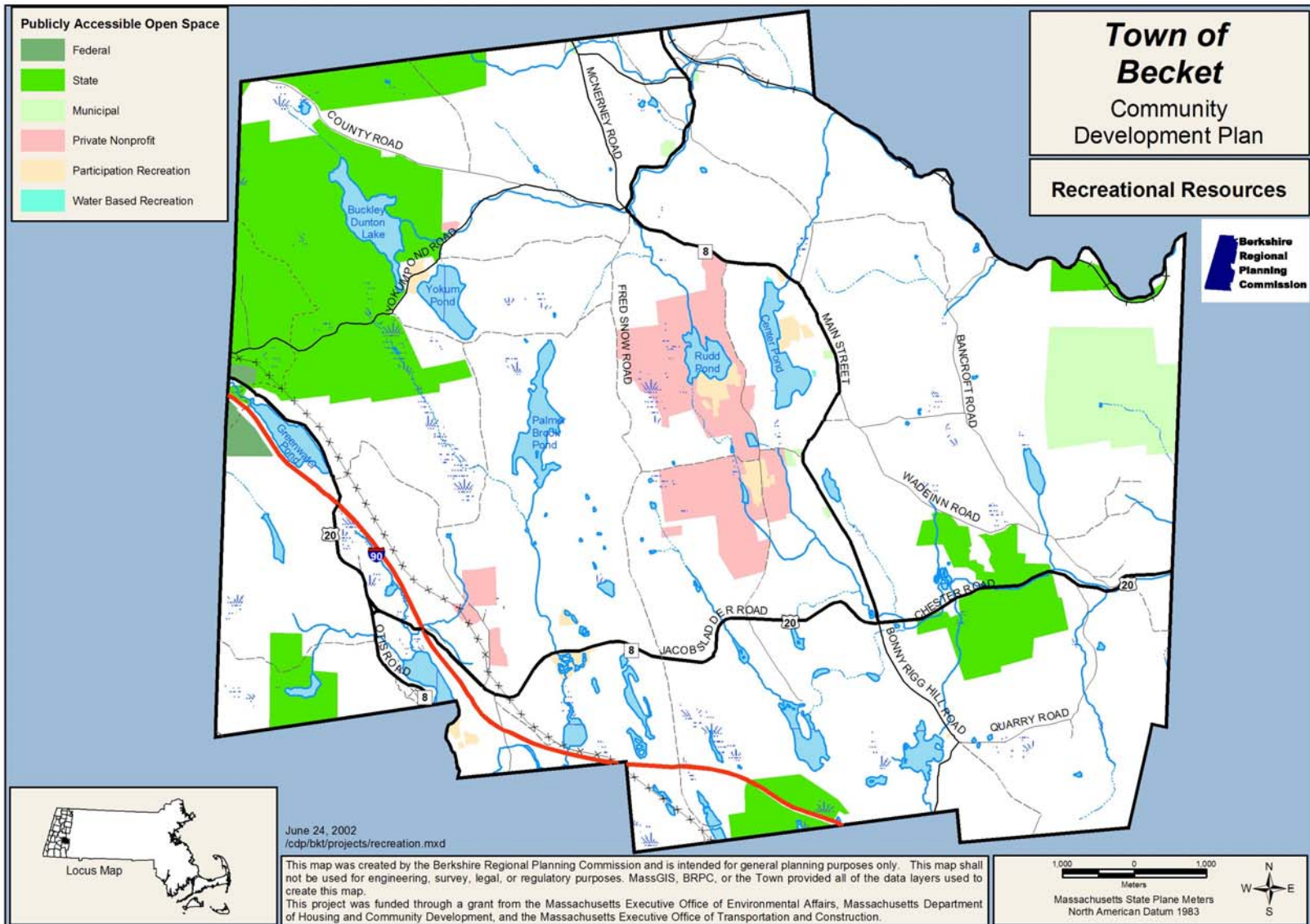
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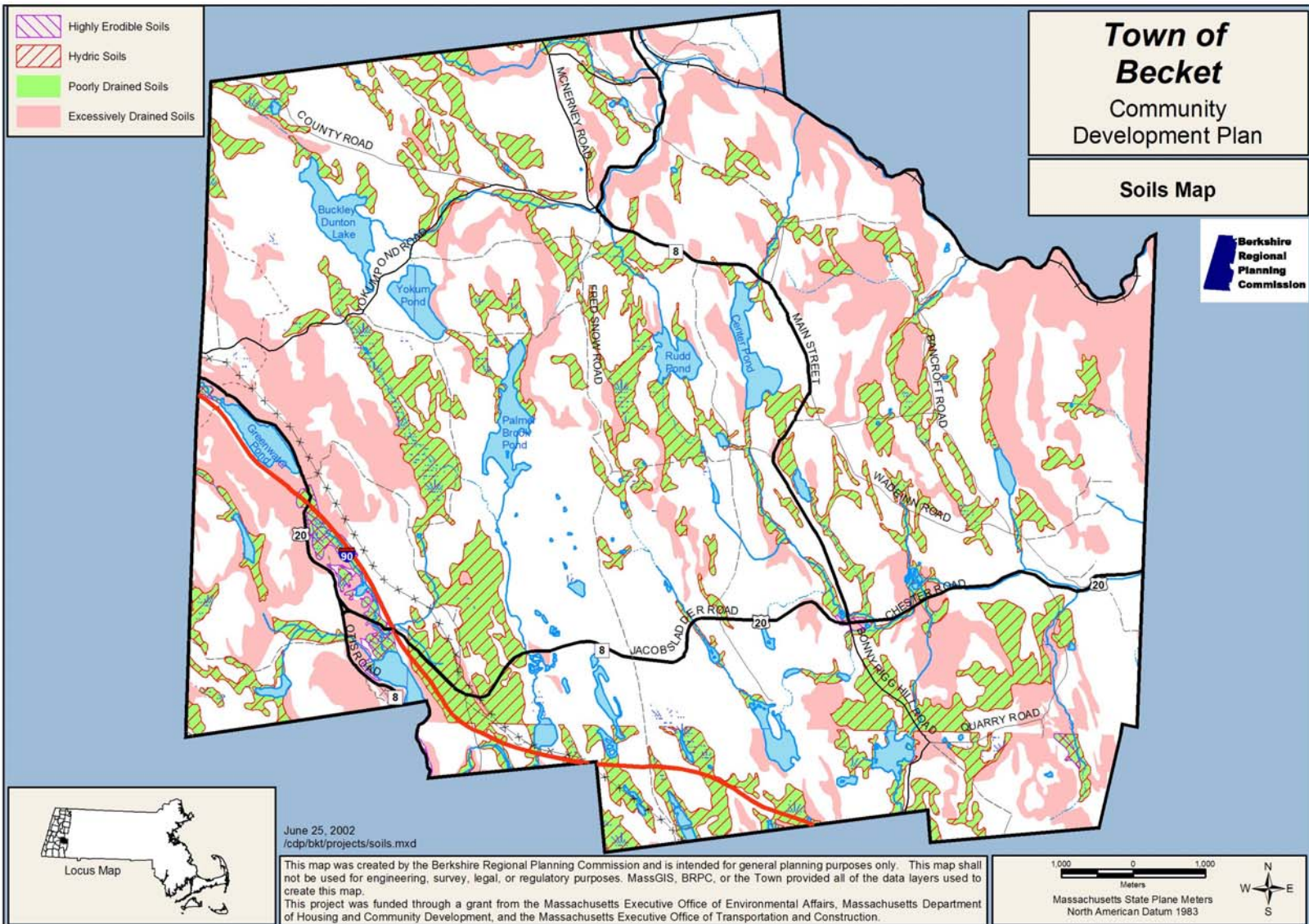


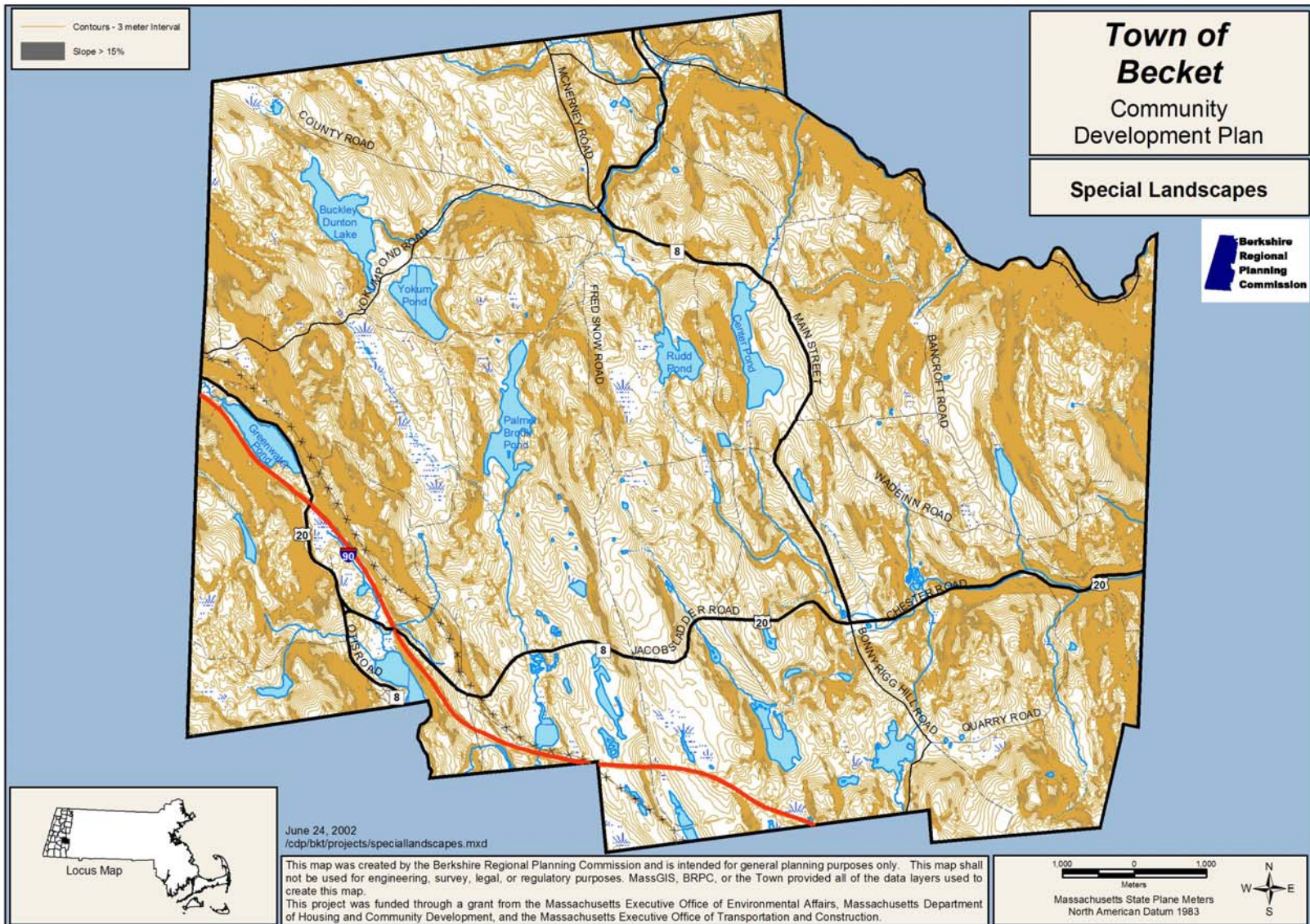


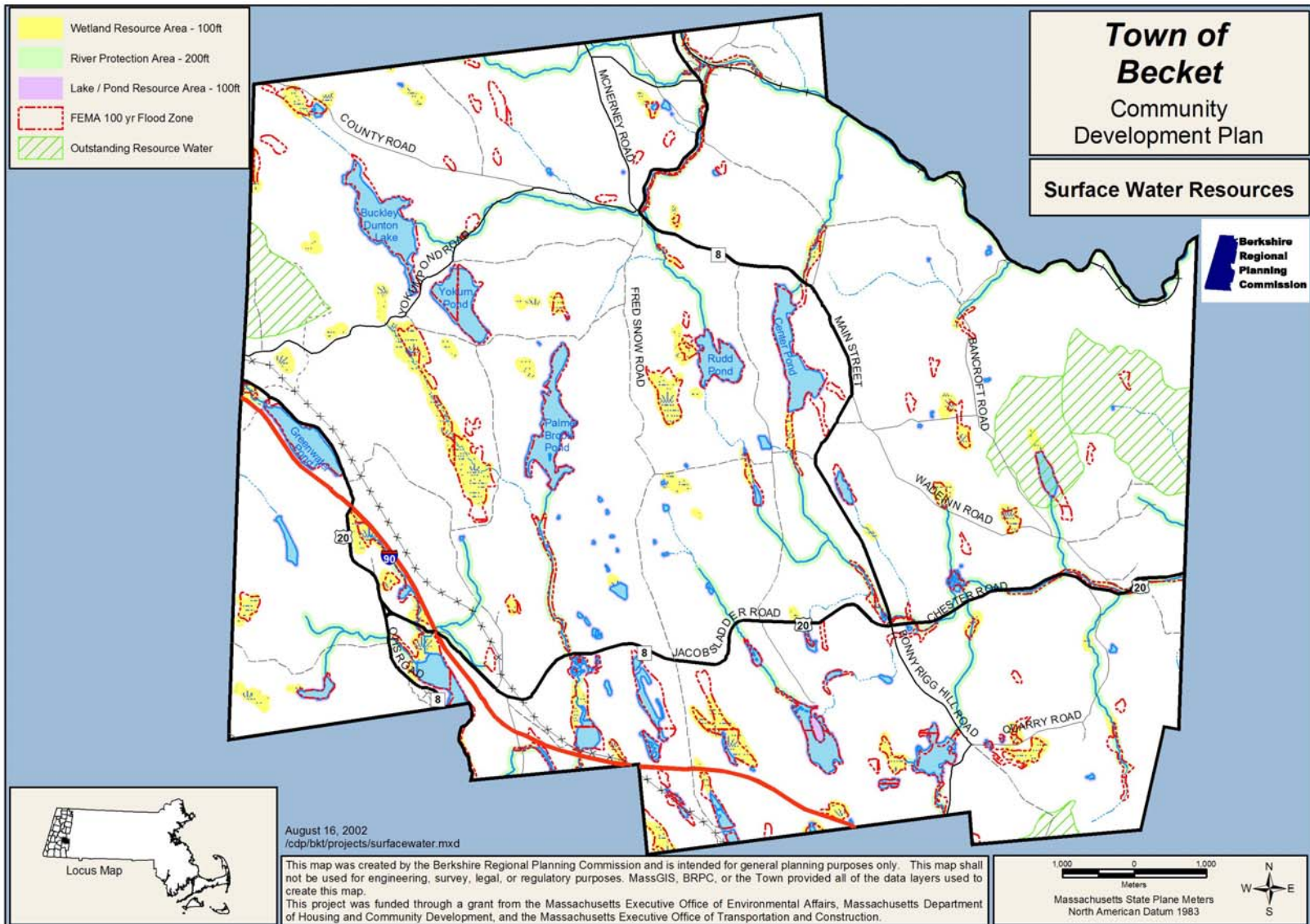


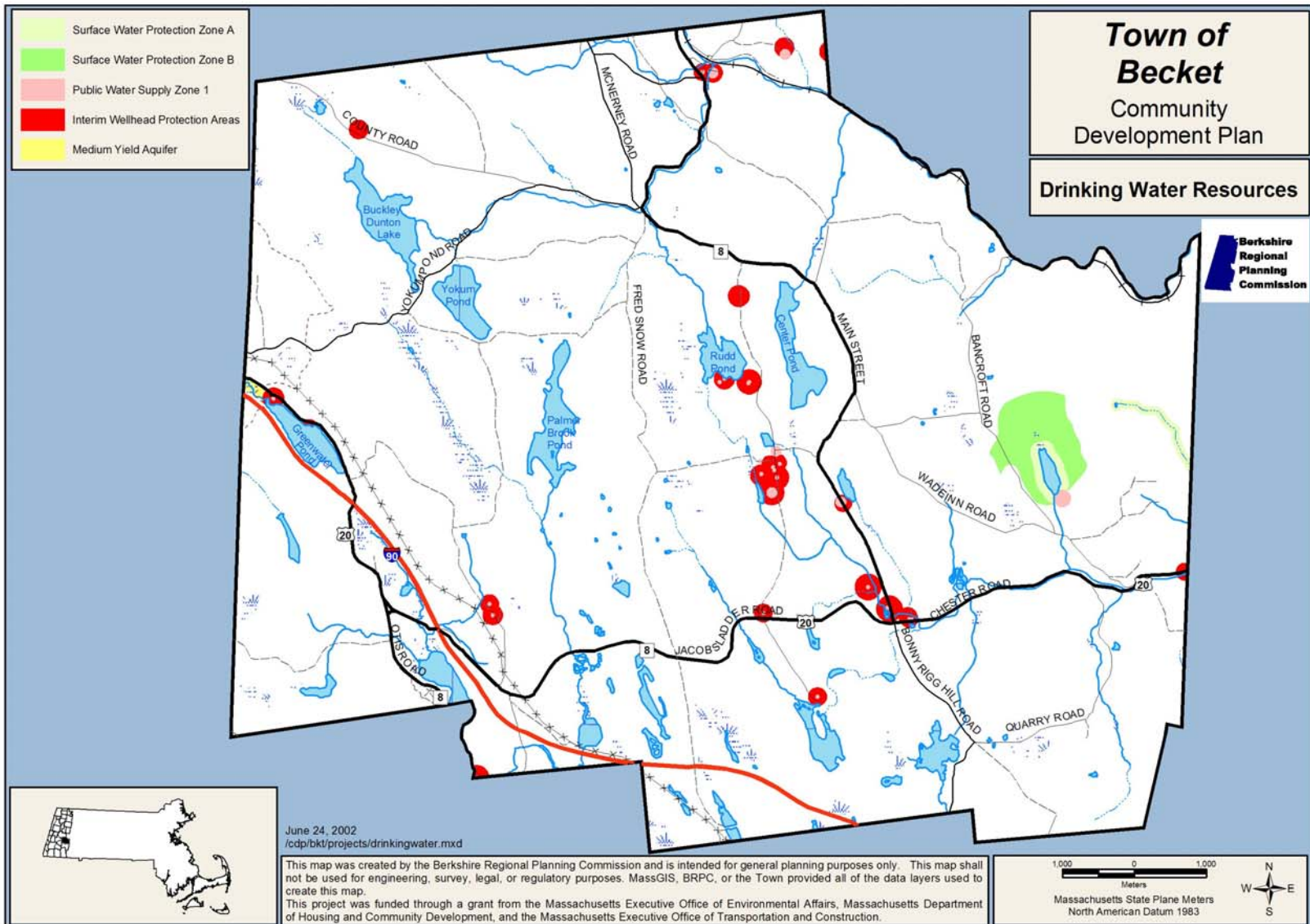












COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN TOWN OF BECKET



Appendix



Appendices

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Appendix A

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Profile

Demographics and Population Characteristics

Historical Population Counts

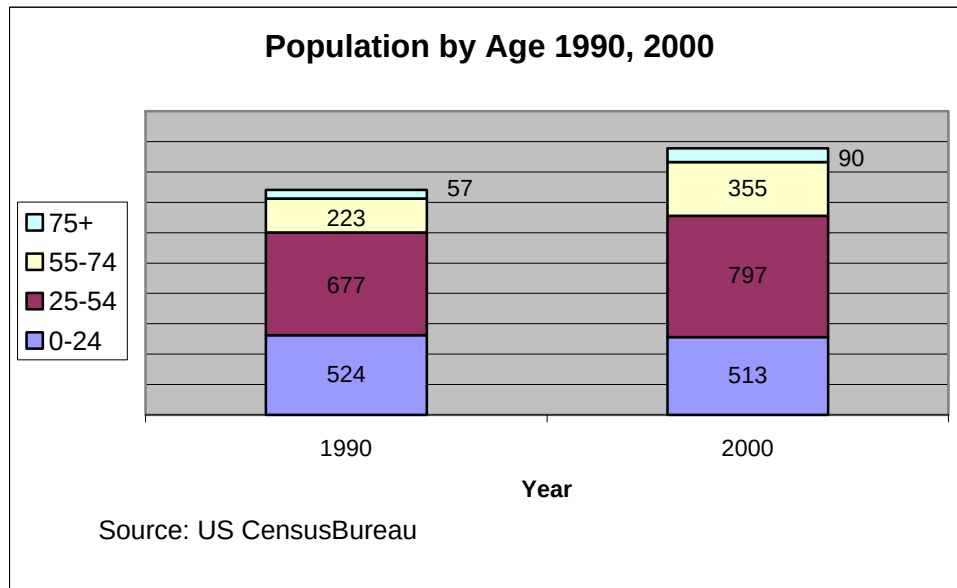
The population of Becket has been increasing rapidly since 1970 by an average of 24% every 10 years⁽¹⁾. During the same time period, population of the surrounding area of Berkshire County has been steadily decreasing by an average of approximately 3% every 10 years.⁽¹⁾

Table E-1 Historical Population Counts

	Becket, MA	Berkshire County
1970	1,017	149,402
1980	1,339	145,110
1990	1,481	139,352
2000	1,755	134,953
Source: BRPC Data Book US Census Figures		

Population By Age

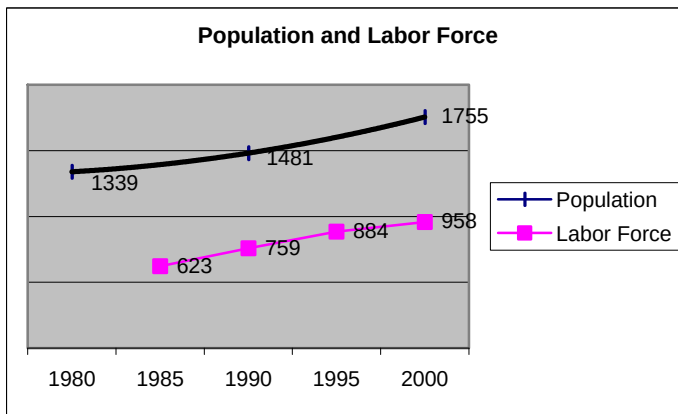
The last ten years have seen a 57% increase in the town population aged 55 or older. This demographic now represents 25% of the total population of the town, increasing the median age to 40.8. The working-age population aged 25-54 years also increased by over 17% from 677 to 797.⁽¹⁾



Labor Force Characteristics

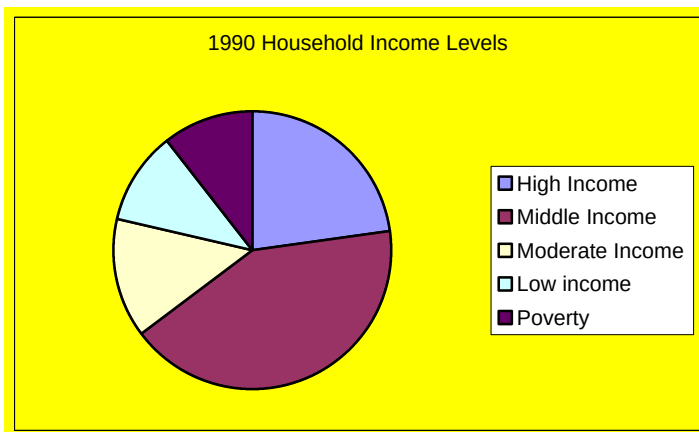
Employment

Becket's Total Labor force as of March 2002 was 1024.⁽⁵⁾ As businesses in Becket employ a total of 450 employees, the large majority of Becket's labor force is employed outside of town. Becket residents experienced a 3.4% unemployment rate in March 2002, which was slightly lower than the statewide unemployment rate of 4.8%.⁽⁵⁾ The increase in labor force reflects the increase in the Town's overall population. While the population has been increasing by an average of 10% every five years since 1970, the labor force has increased by an average of approximately 15% since 1980.



Local Household Income Levels

Becket has a median household income of \$46,806.⁽¹⁾ Becket's median household income was higher than the Berkshire County Median income of \$39,047, but below the state median household income of \$50,502. Twenty percent (21%) of Becket's households were considered low income by EO418 guidelines (earning up to 50% of the Town's median income), 23% of the town was considered moderate income (earning 50-80% of the median income), while 10% of households were considered impoverished (earning less than 30% of the median income). Becket's median household income in 2000 was \$46,806.⁽¹⁾



Educational Attainment

Eighty eight percent (88%) of Becket residents aged 25 years or older had at least a high school degree, while 24% had a bachelor's degree or higher. Throughout Berkshire County, 85% of this demographic have high school diplomas and 26% have bachelor's degree or higher. ⁽¹⁾

Local Educational Opportunities

Residents in Becket have access to higher education (Associate's Level) and technical training programs at Berkshire Community College in Pittsfield. The Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts in North Adams also offers undergraduate and graduate level programs accessible to both day and evening students. Two other residential private colleges serve the region: Williams College and Simon's Rock. Simon's Rock offers high school age students the opportunity to enroll in college programs. The University of Massachusetts also offers a MBA program in Pittsfield. Additional opportunities for technical training or skill-building are viewed as critical to workforce development in the region.

Workforce Development Programs

Residents in Becket have access to a number of workforce development programs and economic development organizations offering workforce development activities, access to training grants, youth employment and training opportunities, strategic planning resources, and much more. Appendix A lists these economic development programs and organizations with a description of the activities and resources in which they are involved.

Business Inventory

Local Business Inventory

The Town of Becket has a long history as a recreation area, due to its many lakes and mountains. Becket is home to several large summer camps and is host to the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, which brings many visitors into the area each summer. The local economy is greatly influenced by tourism, and many of the jobs in town are seasonal and in the service industry. According to figures from the Massachusetts Department of Employment and Training (DET), Becket currently has 33 businesses in Town, employing 450 people with an average wage of 330.43 a week. (See appendix B for the complete list of employers) Over 60% of the Town's employers, and over 90% of Town jobs are in service- producing Industries. Average wage of service producing jobs is 312.05 a week, while the average wage of goods producing jobs is 508.95.

	Employers	Jobs	AVG weekly wage
Total for Goods Producing Industries:	12	42	508.95
Total for Service Producing Industries:	21	408	312.05
Total For All Industries:	33	450	330.43

Regional Business Overview

According to an analysis of employment in the Berkshires by the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board ("Blueprint") 9 industry segments (**Table 1**) are defined as "critical" to the region since these 9 provide the preponderance of employment opportunities, or about 78% of the jobs – in the region.

TABLE 1 – Critical Industries in Berkshire County
Industry **(% Workforce)**

Health & Human Services	16.1%
Travel & Tourism	14.0%
Retail	13.6%
Education	11.2%
Paper/Plastics	8.7%
Construction	5.3%
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	4.1%
Business Services	2.8%
Applied Technology	2.5%
Total:	78.3%

Current Local Growth Trends

Recently, major growth has been seen in the number of jobs available within Becket and the Total Annual Payroll of Becket's employers. Since 1985, DET figures show total number of jobs in Becket to be dramatically increasing at a rate of 49.3% every 5 years, or doubling every 10 years. Total annual payroll of Becket's employers has increased even more greatly than total jobs. Payroll doubled from 1985 to 1990, and then doubled again from 1990-1995. Average annual wages have been increasing as well, and in 2000 were \$22,181, more than double what they were in 1985 (\$9,755). The dramatic increase in average annual wage demonstrates that the new jobs in town have been receiving higher wages.

Table E-1

Year	Total	Avg	Establish-	Total	Govern-	Const-	Manufac- Trade	
	Annual Payroll	Annual Wage	Ments		ment	ruction		
1985	\$1,024,300	\$9,755	19	105	36	conf	12	conf
1990	\$1,958,033	\$15,664	30	125	conf	32	conf	27
1995	\$4,382,819	\$17,531	31	250	65	12	14	144
1996	\$4,498,354	\$19,142	29	235	64	17	13	134
1997	\$5,190,264	\$20,434	28	254	78	15	15	141
1998	\$6,049,298	\$20,860	27	290	84	15	15	172
1999	\$6,688,502	\$19,788	32	338	89	18	20	207
2000	\$7,186,543	\$22,181	34	324	90	20	22	185

Current Regional Growth Trends & Emerging Industries

The 2001 Regional Employment Board Workforce Development Blueprint has identified business services atop 5 other industry sectors with growth rates in employment in excess of 10%, represent the region's "emerging" industries (Table E-3).

TABLE E-3

Industry:	Growth Rate(%):	% of Workforce Employed:
Business Services	25	2.8%
Misc. Retailing	18	4.5%
Spec. Trades Contractors	18	2.6%
Gen'l. Building Contractors	18	1.0%
Amusement & Recreation	15	2.3%
Personal Services	12	1.2%

Another recently recognized growth area in Berkshire County is in the Technology Enterprise sector, which is comprised of four major types of activity: Software and Systems Design; Design and Art; Content and Publishing; and Information Technology (IT) Business Consulting. The University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute recently completed the first major study of the growth of technology enterprise sector in Berkshire County. The study, *Technology Enterprise in Berkshire County: Economic Analysis, Feb 2002*, reports that since 1993, the Technology Enterprise sector has grown at a higher rate than every major division of the Berkshire economy in terms of firm growth, employment growth, and real annual payroll growth. The study shows that payroll for Technology Enterprise firms increased by 190% from 1993-2002, while total payroll in the region increased by only 13.5%.

Future Growth Areas Regionally

Berkshire County's future base is very much tied to its strong past manufacturing base industries – though with substantially fewer employees, but unprecedented output value as measured by Gross Regional Product

Economic forecasts provided by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission using the REMI model indicate that while the service sector will continue its upward trajectory in numbers of employees, high technology and high productivity manufacturing will continue to be the structural and economic base of the region's economy.

Job growth within the major sectors of the regional economy is slated to continue and remain roughly the same proportionally out to 2025.

Services are expected to continue to climb in employment to almost 50% of total employment by 2025, with healthcare services being the leading employer regionally within this sector. Increasing numbers of service jobs can be expected to affect overall wages and income in this region.

Technology Enterprise is also expected to continue to increase its substantial impact on Berkshire County's economy. According to an anonymous survey by the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute, companies associated with this

sector reported a positive business outlook, with 75% expecting increased revenues over the next three years and 96% reporting they are likely to remain in Berkshire County for the next 5 years.

Employment Outlook

Concerns have been raised both by the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board and the Massachusetts Department of Employment and Training's publication on regional workforce trends that much of the job growth taking place in the Berkshires is in low wage segments of the service and retail sectors. At the same time, businesses throughout the region have experienced a difficulty in recruiting qualified employees with job skills and technical abilities matching employer needs.

The number of higher paying small, or "micro" businesses has been growing in the area. The role of small or "micro" businesses is of interest in Becket and the surrounding region for its importance in economic development – especially because of changes in where and how people work. Advances in telecommunications technology and the growth of personal computers in the home have meant many more people can – and do – work at home as self-employed contractors and consultants. Results of the Donahue Institute study on Technology Enterprise found that Berkshire County was home to 1,500 Technology Enterprise sole proprietorships, as well as 154 employer firms with an average of eight employees. This contrasts with the 39 per firm average in manufacturing businesses, and the 15 per firm in the average services industry business in Berkshire County.

Self-employment has been increasing at a faster rate than wage and salary employment both regionally and on a national level. Data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis for 1998 for the Berkshire region indicate that proprietorships (both farm and non-farm) represent about 18% of total regional employment, and have increased in number about 2.8% from 1994.

Factors Influencing Future Economic Development

Housing availability for a Future Work Force

Housing information provided by town officials and the 2000 census show evidence that both the size and makeup of the housing stock is already inadequate for year-round residents and any future workforce. According to census data, from 1990 to 2000 the year-round population increased by 18%. Accordingly, the 2000 vacancy rate for housing units in Becket was a fraction (a third) of the 1990 rate, dropping from 128 units to 47. In the 2000 census Becket still had a huge percentage of seasonal houses, (49% of the housing units were listed as seasonal units), but the number of units listed as seasonal units dropped by 17% from the 1990 census, going from 857 to 712. The drop in seasonal housing units combined with information from the Berkshire Housing Development Corporation, shows that a great deal of seasonal housing is being converted into year-round housing, but often the typical features of a year around unit are lacking. In Becket, seasonal housing has traditionally been *summer* housing providing no heat or insulation for the winter months.

Compatibility with Existing Land Use & Regional Plans

Becket does not currently have business zoning nor any substantially sized existing commercial buildings for businesses to inhabit. However, the Town does have lenient bylaws permitting home occupancies, making home businesses and small-scale enterprise a viable option for current and future residents and possibly an important part of the town's future economy.

Infrastructure, Service Demands & Available Utilities

Becket does not have a public sewer service. Solid waste disposal is conducted at the town transfer station. There is no gas service available in town. Electric service is provided by Western Mass Electric Co, and local telephone service is available through Verizon. Route 8 and Route 20 are the major rural arterials running through town. The Mass Pike (I-90) passes along the southern border of town, but there is no direct local access to the interstate in Becket and the nearest entrance is in the neighboring town of Lee.

Financial Resources in the Berkshires

At this point there is no central "clearinghouse" for information on community development or economic development funds sought or granted for projects or initiatives undertaken in this region. Funding for these purposes in the past has been sought by multiple agencies and organizations, and separate communities with minimal coordination of efforts or region-wide prioritization. As a result, a priority regional goal was established with the intent of improving communication and collaboration on economic development planning and activities for a better, targeted use of resources and a clearer vision of the desired future economy of the region. Establishing a central source for information about funding opportunities available, and tracking both applications for funding and resulting awards will enable the Berkshire region to develop needed expertise in seeking funding.

Workforce Availability

Companies in emerging sectors of the economy, especially Technology Enterprises, are highly dependent on the attraction and retention of a well-educated and professional workforce. A variety of creative and intellectual skills are in demand along with specific technical expertise.

APPENDIX A – WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Listed below are key organizations – both public and private – and a brief summary of recent activities in support of regional economic development and/or recent assessments or studies, which have fostered understanding of regional economic issues:

Berkshire Council for Growth

Leading the coalition-building effort has been the Council for Growth, established in 1998 as a regional outgrowth of the Cellucci Administration's Berkshire Jobs Task Force. The Council and its committees, in partnership with volunteers from many private businesses and support from the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board and the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, have coordinated/spearheaded a number of important regional initiatives including a regional jobs website, www.berkshirejobs.com.

Berkshire Applied Technology Council

Formed in 1997/1998 as a partnership of businesses and government, local schools, Berkshire Community College, and regional 4 year colleges, the Council's mission is to establish the Berkshire region as a technology center of excellence. The Council's goal is to address the workforce needs of manufacturing companies and industries in the region through a long-range strategy of technology-focused educational initiatives. Providing state of the art educational programs, financial assistance, training, and professional support targeting students and incumbent workers, the Berkshire Applied Technology Council addresses a key factor in attracting and retaining technology-based industries and firms – the need for technically trained employees. Berkshire Applied Technology Council has sponsored the following:

TECHPATH

This workforce/educational program was developed in 1997 as a **2+2+2** sequence to link high school to associate to baccalaureate degrees with a high technology curriculum specifically integrating local industry applications. The TECHPATH program is designed to be accessible to incumbent workers, as well as a seamless link in motivating and developing future high tech workers. Over 50 students are currently enrolled in the program.

WOMEN ON TECH PATH PROGRAM

A collaboration with Berkshire Community College, this project will offer after-school training to 22 young women (from the 11 regional public schools) in engineering, graphics/animation, and information technology. A follow-up summer program – the Internet Academy – will also provide job shadowing and electronic networking components.

Berkshire Connect

A regional initiative cited by the Federal Communications Commission in 2000 as a national model for efforts to improve telecommunications access in rural or under-served areas with a cost-effective solution to help drive regional economic activity. The partnership agreement with Global Crossing/Equal

Access Networks has resulted in building sufficient telecommunications infrastructure and services to support the needs of businesses and industry in this region at a competitive and affordable price.

Berkshire County Regional Employment Board (BCREB)

The BCREB is the local organization responsible for assisting employers with workforce development activities, access to training grants, youth opportunities, and strategic planning & oversight. It helps access the following programs: Career Center, Workforce Training Fund, Department of Employment and Training, Berkshire Training and Employment Program, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Advantage Employee Network and Full Employment Program. It also promotes the School-to-Work Initiative, Summer of Work and Learning and Welfare-to-Work Initiative. Two key documents published by the BCREB are its Workforce Development Blueprint (1998, 2000 & 2001 draft) and Workforce Needs Assessment (May, 2000).

Economic Development Organizations

There are a number of regional and local economic development organizations, each with defined geographic service areas and unique missions. These include:

- Berkshire Enterprises:
Berkshire Enterprises runs ten-week training programs addressing a wide range of issues that serve as the foundation for new entrepreneurs. The focus is on business plan development, financing, marketing and management.
- Berkshire Housing Development Corporation
- Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
- Berkshire Training and Employment Program
- Berkshire Visitors Bureau
- Community Development Corporation of Southern Berkshire
- Division of Employment and Training
- Lee Community Development Corporation
- Massachusetts Office of Business Development
- Northern Berkshire Community Development Corporation
- Northern Berkshire Industrial Park and Development Corporation
- Pittsfield Economic Development Authority
- Pittsfield Economic Revitalization Corporation

In addition, the Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce is a major chamber covering Becket.

APPENDIX B: Local Business Listings

PRIMARY SIC	NAME	ADDRESS	CONTACT_#1	PHONE	EMPLOYEES
7217-04	A TO Z CLEANING			623-0185	1 TO 4
1794-03	ANDREWS EXCAVATING	75 HAMILTON RD	C F ANDREWS	623-6691	1 TO 4
7299-63	BACK TO LIFE CHAIR MASSAGE	504 PLUNKETT RESERVOIR RD		655-0200	1 TO 4
6531-18	BECKET AGENCY			623-5000	1 TO 4
9999-77	BECKET ARTS CTR- HILLTOWNS	ROUTE 8		623-6635	NOT AVAILABLE
9311-04	BECKET ASSESSOR	557 MAIN ST	SUSAN DONNELLY	623-5724	1 TO 4
8231-06	BECKET ATHENAEUM INC	3367 MAIN ST	MARGARET GOSS	623-5483	1 TO 4
9121-04	BECKET BUILDING INSPECTOR	557 MAIN ST	KEITH FOX	623-8798	1 TO 4
5399-01	BECKET GENERAL STORE	30 S WASHINGTON N STATE RD	BOB GERNER	623-8712	5 TO 9
5136-01	BECKET HAT CO	63 BECKET WEST RD		243-2506	10 TO 19
1611-04	BECKET HIGHWAY DEPT	47 LYMAN ST	WILLIAM ELOVIRTA	623-8988	5 TO 9
9121-04	BECKET SELECTMEN BOARD	557 MAIN ST	RICHARD FURLONG	623-8934	1 TO 4
9311-04	BECKET TAX COLLECTOR	557 MAIN ST	KATHY HAYN	623-5727	1 TO 4
9121-04	BECKET TOWN ADMINISTRATO R	557 MAIN ST	NINA WEILER	623-8934	5 TO 9
9111-04	BECKET TOWN HALL	557 MAIN ST	NINA WEILER	623-8934	5 TO 9
9121-04	BECKET TOWN SECRETARY	557 MAIN ST	RICHARD FURLONG	623-8934	1 TO 4
9121-04	BECKET TRANSFER STATION	228 WASHINGTON N ST	BERT GOODERMOT E	623-8312	1 TO 4
8211-03	BECKET WASHINGTON SCHOOL	12 MAPLE ST	LAURA DUMOUCHEL	623-8757	20 TO 49
8322-18	BECKET-	748	HEATHER MC	623-8991	20 TO 49

A

	CHIMNEY CORNERS YMCA	HAMILTON RD	DERMOTT		
5141-01	BERKSHIRE BERRIES	ROUTE 20	MARY GRAVES	623-5779	1 TO 4
4724-01	BERKSHIRE CONNECTION		LAURA BALSAM	623-0018	1 TO 4
7338-01	BERKSHIRE COURT REPORTING	490 KIRCHNER RD	DEBORAH PULARO	443-5329	1 TO 4
8641-08	BERKSHIRE FISHING CLUB	398 PLUMB RD		243-5761	1 TO 4
1542-13	BERKSHIRE LANDMARK BUILDERS	243 LEONHARDT RD		623-2222	1 TO 4
7361-03	BERKSHIRE SEARCH ASSOC	PO BOX 459	DONALD MUNGER	623-8855	1 TO 4
1794-03	BLAKELY CONSTRUCTION	357 WADE INN RD		623-9941	1 TO 4
7033-01	BONNY RIGG CAMPING CLUB INC	59 MAIN ST	GARY MACKEY	623-5366	1 TO 4
5813-03	BONNY RIGG INN INC	71 CHESTER RD	JOHN KOKOSZKA	623-8784	1 TO 4
8011-01	BREIT GEORGE G, MD	30 MAPLE ST	GEORGE G BREIT	623-5570	1 TO 4
7011-10	BUCKSTEEP MANOR INN	885 WASHINGTON MOUNTAIN RD	MARK PITSCHE	623-5535	5 TO 9
0782-04	CANTERBURY FARM LANDSCAPING	1986 FRED SNOW RD	DAVID BACON	623-0100	1 TO 4
7011-10	CANTERBURY FARM SKI TOURING	1986 FRED SNOW RD	DAVID BACON	623-0100	1 TO 4
8111-03	CAPELESS JR ROBERT T	9 COUNTY RD	ROBERT T CAPELESS JR	623-5602	1 TO 4
3599-03	CAWLEY MACHINE & TOOL	1087 S WASHINGTON STATE RD	BILL CAWLEY	623-8730	1 TO 4
8211-03	CENTRAL BERKSHIRE RGNL SCHOOL	12 MAPLE		623-2392	20 TO 49
5084-44	CESCO PLUMBING & HEATING	2601 MAIN ST	CHRIS SWINDLEHURST	623-5323	10 TO 19
1711-05	CESCO PLUMBING & HEATING	ROUTE 8	CHRISTOPHER SWINDLEHURST	623-5323	10 TO 19
6531-18	CHESTER REALTY	29 CHESTER RD ROUTE 20		623-5100	1 TO 4
0782-04	DENIS	340	DENIS	623-5102	1 TO 4

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2791-02	DUQUETTE LANDSCAPING DEWHURST FRISBIE GRAPHICS	MIDDLEFIELD RD ROUTE 20	DUQUETTE NANCY FRISBIE	243-4200	1 TO 4
5812-08	DREAM AWAY LODGE	1342 COUNTY RD	DANIEL OSMAN	623-8725	10 TO 19
9999-77	DSM ENGINEERING PLASTICS	474 PLUNKETT RESERVOIR RD	ALBERT DINICOLA	655-0141	1 TO 4
8699-03	EAST WEST FOUNDATION	LELAND RD		623-5741	1 TO 4
1521-03	ED BOND DESIGN BUILD	112 FROST RD	EDWARD BOND	623-5782	1 TO 4
9224-04	EMERGENCY SVC DISPATCH	RT 8	STEPHEN GALLAHER	623-8760	20 TO 49
5211-42	EVERMORE LUMBER CO	MAPLE ST		623-5668	5 TO 9
8661-07	FEDERATED BAPTIST CHURCH	2 MAPLE ST		623-5217	1 TO 4
8661-07	FIRST CONGREGATIO NAL CHURCH	YMCA RD	PAUL BLEND	623-8300	1 TO 4
7929-08	FUN COUNTRY DJ-ALL OCCASIONS	SHERWOOD DR		623-8375	1 TO 4
8322-18	HEAD START	STONEHOUS E RD	ELOISE BURDICK	623-6489	1 TO 4
8351-01	HEAD START BECKET SCHOOL	12 MAPLE	ELOISE BURDICK	623-2018	1 TO 4
8211-03	HEARTWOOD SCHOOL	JOHNSON HILL RD	WILLIAM BEEMER	623-6677	1 TO 4
0742-01	HILLTOWNS VETERINARY CLINIC	ROUTE 8	EDWIN J NEUMUTH	623-5329	1 TO 4
0783-01	J & R TREE SVC	169 HIGH ST	JOSEPHINE BURKE	623-8826	1 TO 4
7922-07	JACOB'S PILLOW DANCE FESTIVAL	358 GEORGE CARTER RD	ELLA BAFF	243-0745	10 TO 19
3554-01	JJM TECHNOLOGIE S	572 MCNERNEY RD	RONALD DEFOE	623-0280	1 TO 4
5411-05	K & T COUNTRY STORE	609 MAIN		623-0055	5 TO 9
5499-01	KUSHI FOUNDATION STORE	LELAND RD	JIM TYLER	623-2102	20 TO 49
8222-98	KUSHI INSTITUTE	198 LELAND RD	MERCEDES GALLAGHER	623-6679	20 TO 49
8211-03	KUSHI INSTITUTE	308 LELAND RD		623-5741	20 TO 49

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1521-12	LINDAL CEDAR HOMES INC	ANDREWS CORNER	HAL KOBRIN	243-4949	1 TO 4
8712-02	LORIO ANTHONY J	RT 20	ANTHONY J LORIO	243-0205	1 TO 4
0782-06	LUSCIOUS LAWNS	104 WASHINGTON MOUNTAIN RD		443-7299	1 TO 4
5734-07	M TECH	22 DAWN DR	MARY BARAN	394-9975	1 TO 4
9999-77	MACROBIOTICS			623-5741	NOT AVAILABLE
9999-77	MASSACHUSETTS TURNPIKE AUTHORITY	GEORGE CARTER RD		243-2915	NOT AVAILABLE
7538-01	MOHAWK GARAGE	ROUTE 8	PETE TALABACH	623-6022	1 TO 4
9999-77	MOUNTAIN GROVE ASSOC	SHAW PD		243-0705	NOT AVAILABLE
8299-18	MUSIC SCHOOL	74 S WASHINGTON STATE RD	DEBORAH DUFF	623-8854	1 TO 4
7032-03	NATURE'S CLASSROOM-CAMP CHMNY	HAMILTON RD		623-5361	5 TO 9
7532-01	NORTH BECKET AUTO BODY	ROUTE 8	ROGER PAGEREY	623-5885	1 TO 4
5499-01	O U 2000 INC	RR 8		623-5895	1 TO 4
8399-98	ONE PEACEFUL WORLD	84 LELAND RD	ALEX JACK	623-2322	1 TO 4
7371-03	PICOTEK	ROUTE 8		623-2236	1 TO 4
1721-01	PINNACLE PAINTING CO		MARK F ROOS	623-8737	1 TO 4
7692-03	PIONEER WELDING & FABRICATION	141 NOTTINGHAM CIR	CLAY MARTINELL	623-9962	1 TO 4
8399-98	PLANETARY HEALTH INC	305 BROOKER HILL RD	ALEX JACK	623-0012	1 TO 4
9221-04	POLICE DEPT	557 MAIN ST	WILLIAM ELLOVIRTA	623-6010	5 TO 9
5813-04	ROADHOUSE WOODY'S	ROUTE 8	WOODROW WITTER	623-8302	5 TO 9
5712-17	SARAH CASE & CO			623-2211	1 TO 4
7033-01	SUMMIT HILL CAMPGROUND INC	SUMMIT HL	GEORGE H ROBERTS	623-5761	1 TO 4
7999-57	SUNNY BANKS RANCH	2299 MAIN ST	CATHERINE ROBINSON	623-5399	1 TO 4
8299-29	TIMBER FRAMERS GUILD	148 MIDDLEFIELD RD	WILL BEEMER	623-9926	1 TO 4
7011-07	TOLLGATE INN	54 OLD OTINS RD#54	BETTY ARNOLD	243-0715	1 TO 4

A

7011-01	TOLLGATE INN	ROUTE 8		243-0715	1 TO 4
7291-01	TOOMEY	37 MITCHELL	DEBORAH A	623-6682	1 TO 4
	DEBORAH A	RD	TOOMEY		
9121-04	TOWN	443 S	CRAIG WILLIS	623-8383	1 TO 4
	GARAGE	WASHINGTON			
		N STATE RD			
5932-02	TOWN PUMP	2 N	HOWARD F	623-6008	1 TO 4
	ANTIQUES INC	WASHINGTON	LAPIER		
		N STATE RD			
4311-01	US POST	WASHINGTON	ELLEN YOUNG	623-8845	5 TO 9
	OFFICE	N ST			
3599-03	WASHINGTON	465 FROST	ROBERT	623-5511	1 TO 4
	MT PRECISION	RD	WELLS		
	SHOP				

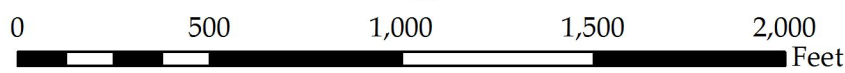
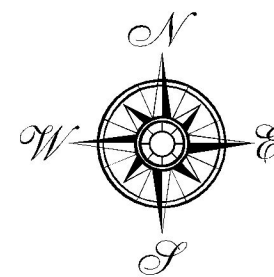
References

- ⁽¹⁾ United State Census Bureau, 2000 Census.
- ⁽²⁾ Technology Enterprise in Berkshire County: Economic Analysis, University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute, February 2002.
- ⁽³⁾ Workforce Development Blueprint, Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, Inc., July 2002.
- ⁽⁴⁾ America's Labor Market Information System Employer Database, 2nd edition. InfoUSAGov., 2001.
- ⁽⁵⁾ Massachusetts Department of Employment and Training, July 2002.
- ⁽⁶⁾ Massachusetts Department of Revenue, July 2002.

North Becket Village
Appendix A.1



This map was created by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and is intended for general planning purposes only. This map shall not be used for engineering, survey, legal, or regulatory purposes. MassGIS, Massachusetts Highway Department, BRPC or the town may have supplied portions of this data.



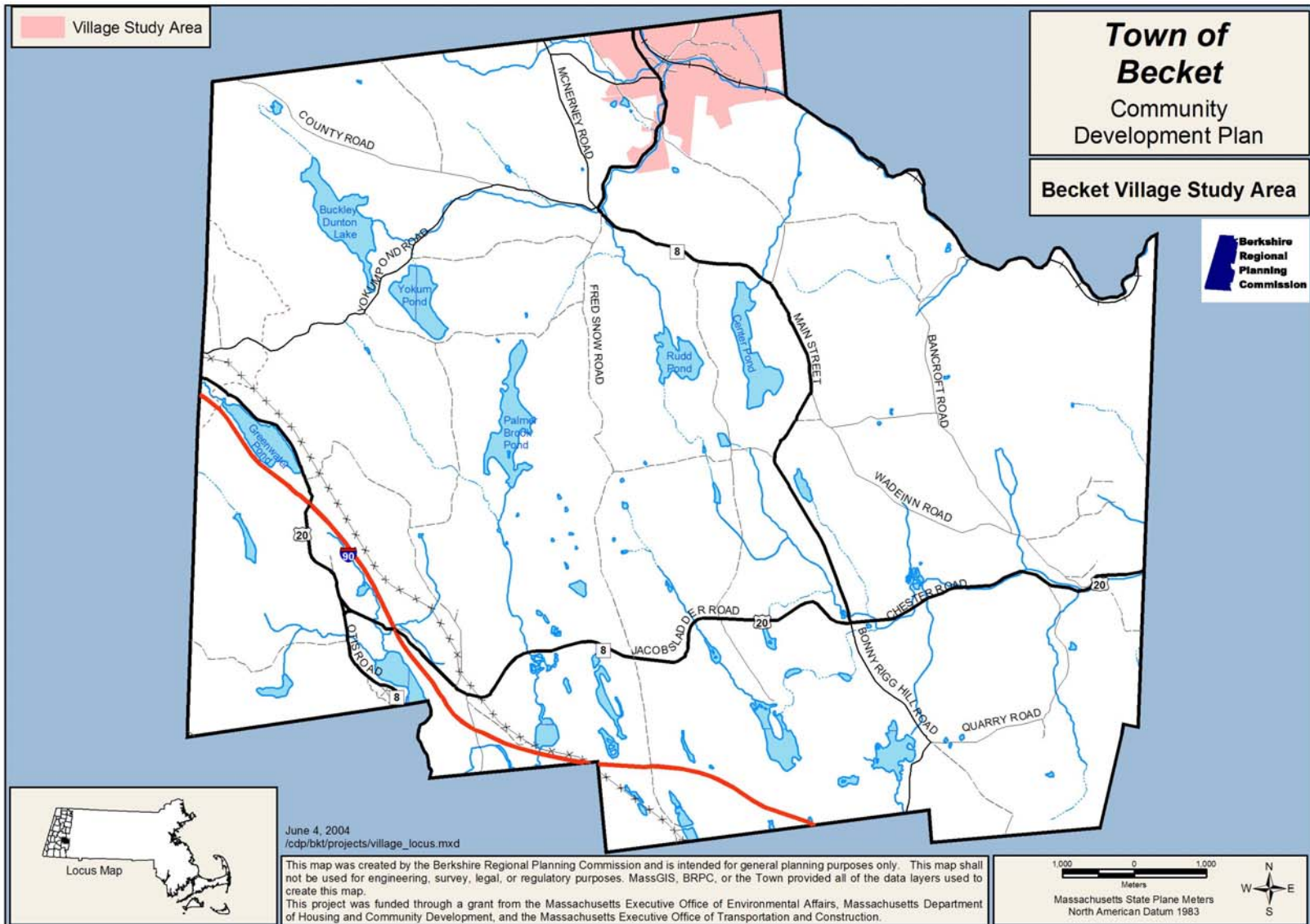
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN TOWN OF BECKET



Appendix - A.2

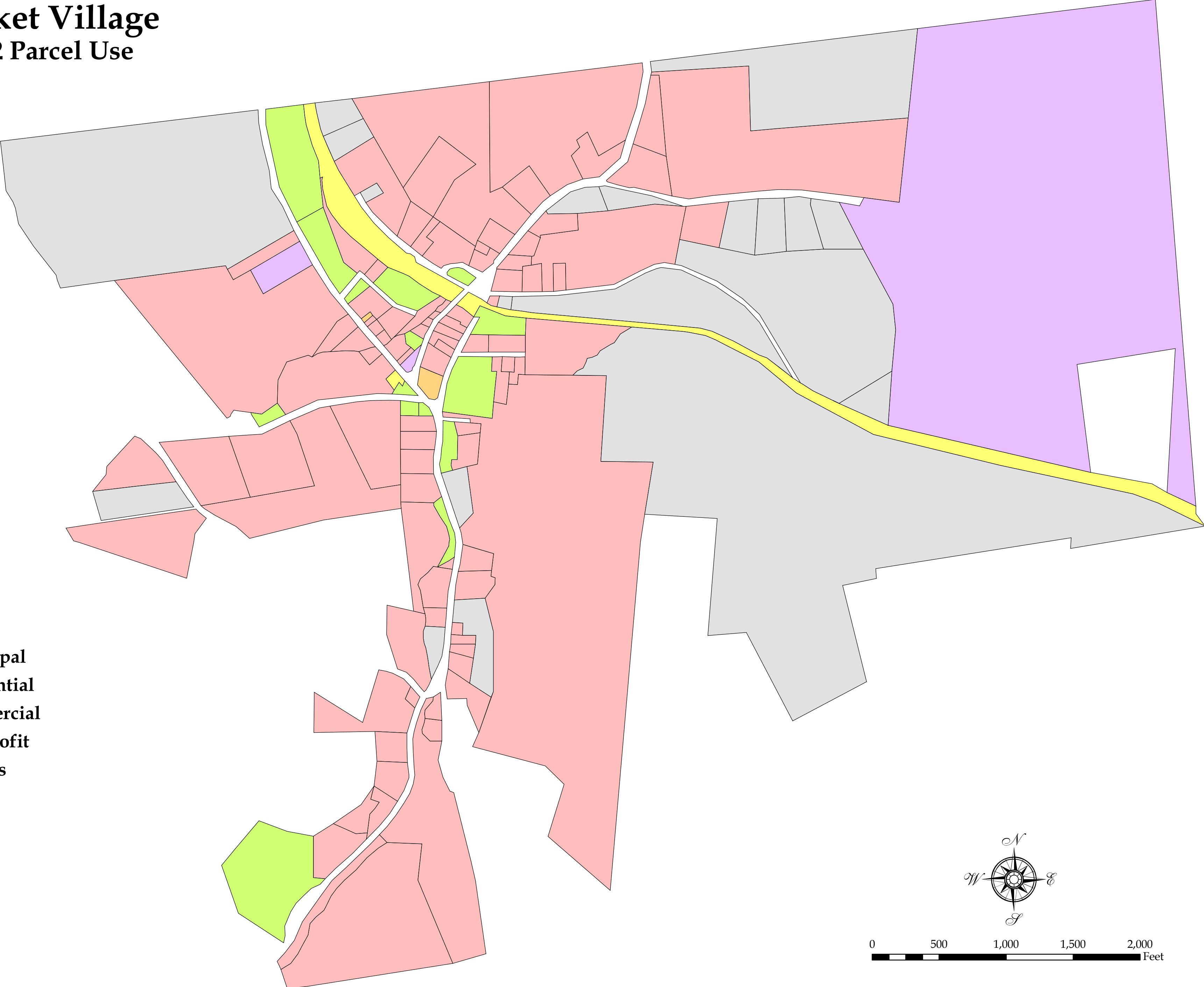


Becket Village Study and Parcel Use Maps



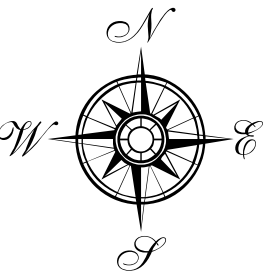
North Becket Village

Appendix A.2 Parcel Use



Parcel Use

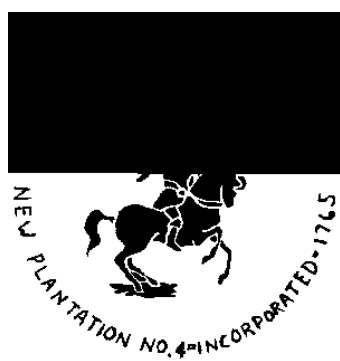
- Municipal
- Residential
- Commercial
- Non-Profit
- Utilities
- Vacant



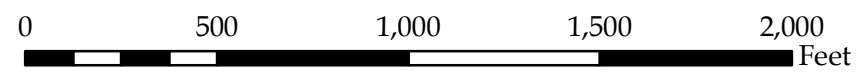
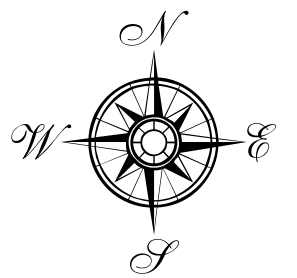
0 500 1,000 1,500 2,000 Feet

Becket Village

Parcels



 Parcels



**Appendix: A.2a
Local Business Listings**

Map Parcel	Use	#	Street		Historic	Owner	Additional Owner Info	Year Built	Stories	Acres	SF	Upper SF	Add'l SF	Building Value	Land Value
206-13	903	0	BROOKER HILL ROAD			TOWN OF BECKET		0	0	0.51	0	0	0	0	5706
206-14	903	12	BROOKER HILL ROAD	43	Mullen House	TOWN OF BECKET		1845	2	0.24	1010	800	0	67500	6540
206-15	430	29	WASHINGTON STREET			NEW ENGLAND TELEPHONE CO	C/O PROPERTY TAX DEPAR	0	0	0.23	0	0	0	127900	6426
206-16	101	51	WASHINGTON STREET			TOOLEY DONNA M & POMEROY ALA	C/O POMEROY ALAN S	1900	2	6.8	1298	644	0	100000	28100
206-17	104	53	WASHINGTON STREET			GALLAGHER MERCEDES		1890	2	0.28	978	672	0	80700	6975
206-18	101	73	WASHINGTON STREET			PENCKE JOAN M		1825	2	0.77	940	600	0	84900	14242
206-19	101	85	WASHINGTON STREET			ROBERTS BARBARA ANNE		1880	2	0.77	1216	440	0	94000	14242
206-20	101	42	LOVERS LANE			VANZANDT GENEVIEVE		1875	2	26.4	630	630	0	68300	38100
206-21	332	145	WASHINGTON STREET			TALABACH THEADORE P		0	0	1.9	0	0	0	153100	20530
206-22	101	157	WASHINGTON STREET			COOPER RICHARD & ARMINE		1875	2	1.1	690	594	0	74100	17472
206-23	130	0	LOVERS LANE			COUTURE NORMAN P TRUSTEE	KONARSKI REALTY TRUST	0	0	46	0	0	0	0	41003
206-24	903	238	WASHINGTON STREET			TOWN OF BECKET	TRANSFER STATION	0	0	4.7	0	0	0	0	18053
206-25	903	108	WASHINGTON STREET	38	Becket Town Office Building	TOWN OF BECKET	FIRE STATION 1	0	0	2.8	0	0	0	165900	22100
206-26	103	23	LYMAN STREET			SALVINI HUBERT & SUSAN		1960	1	1.6	728	0	0	33400	19395
206-27	101	31	LYMAN STREET			TREMBLAY FRANCIS & GLORIA		1960	1.33	0.33	864	285	104	56100	7345
206-28	903	47	LYMAN STREET			TOWN OF BECKET	HIGHWAY GARAGE & SALT	0	0	1.8	0	0	0	129200	20126
206-29	101	74	LYMAN STREET			SULLIVAN NOMINEE TRUST		1875	2	0.68	1109	845	0	101300	12264
206-30	101	64	LYMAN STREET			WILSON TINA E		1875	1.5	0.71	923	286	0	77200	12924
206-31	101	52	LYMAN STREET			GODDARD WILLIAM M JR & ALYSA L		1875	2	1	936	936	0	92300	17096
206-32	903	0	LYMAN STREET			TOWN OF BECKET		0	0	0.36	0	0	0	0	5026
206-33	906	78	WASHINGTON STREET	39	St. Matthews Church	ST MATTHEWS CHURCH	C/O ST PATRICKS CHURCH	0	0	0.08	0	0	0	131700	2439
206-34	101	74	WASHINGTON STREET			GODDARD WILLIAM M JR & ALYSA L		1900	2.5	0.08	874	897	0	67200	2439
206-35	101	70	WASHINGTON STREET			STANTON ROBERT & ROBIN		1900	2	0.18	556	556	72	60700	5488
206-36	101	62	WASHINGTON STREET			AITKEN BETH E	C/O FST NAT BANK OF BERK	1880	1.5	0.14	600	170	0	40300	4269
206-37	13	42	WASHINGTON STREET			WEILER HERBERT & ELAINE		1890	2	0.52	1148	1148	0	151100	8737
206-38	101	36	WASHINGTON STREET			PACKARD JEANETTE		1875	1.5	0.47	600	300	0	58500	8113
206-39	325	30	WASHINGTON STREET			GERNER ROBERT & JANET M		0	0	0.37	0	0	0	87400	7547
206-41	903	0	HIGH STREET			TOWN OF BECKET		0	0	0.29	0	0	0	0	4747
206-46	900	0	DEPOT STREET			NEW YORK CENTRAL LINES LLC		0	0	46.6	0	0	0	0	41303
206-47	903	0	HIGH STREET			TOWN OF BECKET		0	0	0.37	0	0	0	0	5056
206-48	130	0	DEPOT STREET			MAHONEY JOHN W		0	0	1.4	0	0	0	0	12468
206-49	130	0	DEPOT STREET			SHAFFER FRANK & CARRIE	C/O TOWN OF BECKET	0	0	1.3	0	0	0	0	1950
206-50	130	0	DEPOT STREET			BASCOM LINCOLN L		0	0	0.31	0	0	0	0	4673
206-51	101	92	DEPOT STREET			MAHONEY JOHN W		1845	2	4.2	978	912	0	112700	24200
206-52	101	72	DEPOT STREET			LAMONTAGNE JANE L		1875	1.5	1	567	899	0	54400	17096
206-53	106	58	DEPOT STREET			GAYLORD MARK K & SHIRLEY		1875	2	0.67	829	616	0	4100	8068
206-54	101	44	DEPOT STREET			CHANDLER KATHLEEN R		1800	1.5	1.6	726	363	0	63500	19395
206-55	101	111	HIGH STREET	56	Ariel Raymond House	FLINT ANN M & PAUL L		1930	1	0.3	1118	0	0	70000	8737
206-56	101	115	HIGH STREET	57	Old Phil Raymond House	ELSON RACHEL F	C/O NATIONAL CITY MORTG	1890	1	0.18	1460	0	0	88600	5488
206-57	101	135	HIGH STREET	58	S.W. Taylor House	FLEIG ERIN C		1875	1.5	0.24	1146	210	0	86700	6540
206-58	101	153	HIGH STREET			VACHULA JOHN S & SHIRLEY A		1971	1.33	3.5	756	185	160	91900	23150
206-59	101	155	HIGH STREET	40b	"Long House"/Simmons House	SIMMONS ROY & JOAN		1930	1.5	15	1812	712	0	155800	32400
206-60	101	169	HIGH STREET	59	Eames-Molineaux House	BURKE RUSSELL & JOSEPHINE		1780	1.5	1.2	1352	412	0	89400	17856
206-61	101	189	HIGH STREET	60	Pomeroy-Spencer House	SPENCER LEONARD HOLMES		1880	1.5	1.4	1244	442	0	90000	18609
206-62	101	257	HIGH STREET			KITATANI KATSUHIIDE & AKIKO		1988	1.5	2.05	2086	1043	0	218000	20975
206-63	101	274	HIGH STREET			WARWICK MANOR BEHAVIORAL	HEALTH INC	1890	2.33	2	1625	1916	0	257900	20900
206-64	101	240	HIGH STREET			MARSH PAUL F	C/O KEVIN E MARSH	1915	2.33	2.04	1660	2207	0	236200	20960
206-64-1	130	0	LELAND RD			MARSH PAUL F	C/O KEVIN MARSH	0	0	1.8	0	0	0	0	13800
206-65	101	304	HIGH STREET			RONNING MARGARET		1925	2	25	2538	2004	0	238200	37400
206-66	101	83	PLEASANT STREET		Quarry	BERGERON GERARD A & RITA L		1875	2	11.27	1758	928	0	129400	34811
206-67	101	148	HIGH STREET	63	Old Messenger Homestead	CESTARI VICTOR R & JOYCE		1850	2	0.98	978	768	0	85000	16877
206-67-1	130	0	HIGH STREET	63	Old Messenger Homestead	BURKE RUSSELL & JOSEPHINE		0	0	1.3	0	0	0	0	3000
206-68	101	130	HIGH STREET	62	McCarthy House	NEILL SHRAVAN S	C/O JANET NEILL	1875	2	1.2	888	624	0	72700	17856
206-69	101	116	HIGH STREET	61	Rogers House	PELTIER WALTER & VIOLA	C/O WIENERS FREDERICK &	1880	2	0.64	948	528	0	80500	11382

**Appendix: A.2a
Local Business Listings**

Map Parcel	Use	#	Street		Historic	Owner	Additional Owner Info	Year Built	Stories	Acres	SF	Upper SF	Add'l SF	Building Value	Land Value
206-70	101	43	PLEASANT STREET	40d	Davis Home	DAVIS MARVIN A		1849	2	0.87	2017	1044	0	136500	15673
206-71	101	71	PLEASANT STREET	40a	H.Cerelia Snow House	WOOLDRIDGE TERRY D & CHARLO	C/O WOOLDRIDGE CHARLO	1875	2	0.76	1276	928	0	105800	14025
206-72	101	93	PLEASANT STREET			GARGAN DENNIS A & SYLVIA J		1900	1.33	0.43	804	147	0	47400	7881
206-73	130	0	PLEASANT STREET			DELREGNO CHARLES ESTATE OF	C/O DARLENE D LAOUE	0	0	12	0	0	0	0	24003
206-74	130	0	PLEASANT STREET	64	Wright Barnes House	FRENIER LOUISE	C/O SHUTTLEWORTH LOUIS	0	0	0.2	0	0	0	0	4085
206-75	101	44	PLEASANT STREET	40c	Old Higley Apothecary Shop	DAVIS MARVIN		1880	2	0.12	680	680	0	19500	3659
206-77	101	3433	MAIN STREET	49b	Raymond's Store	ROCK LOUIS W & FAITH E		1900	1	0.35	1495	0	0	55500	7446
206-78	101	3429	MAIN STREET	40e	Old Post Office Building	DEZESE GERALD & DONNA	C/O CITY MORTGAGE	1900	2	0.31	1242	1080	0	107800	7250
206-79	101	3425	MAIN STREET	49a	Higley House	KOZINSKI JOHN &	THOMAS JEANETTE	1858	2	0.29	1176	960	0	118800	7008
206-80	104	3417	MAIN STREET	48	Norcott House	BAKER KATHLEEN M		1875	2	0.36	1528	1297	0	135800	7501
206-81	104	3397	MAIN STREET	44	McCormick House	ESKO WENDY C		1825	2	0.72	1224	1208	0	96200	13136
206-81	104	3397	MAIN STREET	45	Miss Church's Barn										
206-83	906	3381	MAIN STREET	37	Federated Church Parish House	FEDERATED CHURCH		1875	2	0.71	1836	1260	0	322800	12924
206-83	906	3381	MAIN STREET	36	Becket Federated Church	FEDERATED CHURCH		1849	1	0.71	3460	0	0	322800	12924
206-84	101	3411	MAIN STREET	46	Frank Prentice House	SWINDLEHURST CHRISTOPHER	C/O FRANCIS SARAH	1927	1	0.22	682	0	0	43800	6317
206-85	903	0	MAIN STREET			TOWN OF BECKET		0	0	1.4	0	0	0	0	12468
206-86	101	21	MAPLE STREET	55	Baptist Parsonage	O'CONNOR JEANNE		1875	2	0.5	1122	901	0	88400	8297
206-87	101	49	MAPLE STREET			TARJICK RAYMOND M & MELISSA E		1889	1.5	0.8	1274	481	0	74800	14897
206-88	106	51	MAPLE STREET			KELLY DONALD D		0	0	5.2	0	0	0	47200	18803
206-89	130	0	MAPLE STREET			PROPERTIES OF AMERICA INC		0	0	110	0	0	0	0	73003
206-90	109	50	MAPLE STREET			BOLDUC DAVID R & HELEN A		1875	1.5	0.38	996	273	0	55200	7600
206-90	109	50	MAPLE STREET			BOLDUC DAVID R & HELEN A		1960	1	0.38	560	0	0	55200	7600
206-91	101	46	MAPLE STREET			WILLIAMS EDWARD & LORETTA		1955	1	0.23	864	0	0	44400	6426
206-92	101	30	MAPLE STREET	54	Fmr Willis House--Briet House	BREIT ESTELLE B		1875	2	0.69	1715	775	0	111600	12474
206-93	904	12	MAPLE STREET	53	Becket Consolidated School	TOWN OF BECKET	BECKET CONSOLIDATED SC	0	0	3	0	0	0	2354500	22400
206-94	101	27	PRENTICE PLACE	51	Prentice House	DIPRETA VINCENT & GAIL ASHLEY		1825	2	0.94	1475	1063	0	121300	16443
206-95	101	23	PRENTICE PLACE	52	Old Basket Shop Shed	ASHLEY GAIL D &	DIPRETA VINCENT	1875	1.5	0.39	600	300	360	60300	7645
206-96	903	0	MAIN STREET	903	Ballou Park	TOWN OF BECKET		0	0	0.71	0	0	0	0	8659
206-97	130	0	MAIN STREET	50	Becket Silk Mill	BOYNE JOHN J & BARBARA T		0	0	1.4	0	0	0	0	12468
206-98	101	3258	MAIN STREET			WECHTER LORRAINE T		1915	2	78	1352	1064	0	115200	63900
206-99	101	3307	MAIN STREET			LASSEUR JEAN-LUC & MAXINE FASS		1875	2	3.7	872	830	0	81900	23450
206-100	903	0	MAIN STREET			TOWN OF BECKET		0	0	0.936	0	0	0	0	10983
206-101	101	3309	MAIN STREET	31	Jonathan W. Wheeler House	BURG MICHAEL & NANCY		1860	1.5	1.3	1555	505	0	131000	18231
206-102	101	3327	MAIN STREET	32	Hendriks House	HENDRIKS HENDRIK & CORNELIA		1853	2	1	1499	1174	0	163900	17096
206-103	101	3343	MAIN STREET	33	Sean Mulholland House	MULHOLLAND SEAN & DONNA		1875	2	0.77	1435	1038	0	162200	14242
206-104	101	3351	MAIN STREET	33a	Stanely House	WILLEY DAVID J & NANCY J		1854	2	0.69	1205	875	0	101900	12474
206-105	903	3367	MAIN STREET	34	Becket Athenaeum/Library	BECKET ATHENAEUM INC		0	0	0.16	0	0	0	83100	41900
206-106	903	7	BROOKER HILL ROAD	35	Becket Arts Center	TOWN OF BECKET	SEMINARY HALL	0	0	0.33	0	0	0	110300	7345
206-107	101	69	BROOKER HILL ROAD			GERNER ROBERT E & JANET M		1967	1	5.7	864	0	0	56300	26450
206-109	101	133	BROOKER HILL ROAD			WATTIE MARY WILSON & ELIZABET	C/O THOMAS WILSON	1875	2	5.2	988	688	0	83800	25700
206-108	109	190	CARTER ROAD			NIX JONATHAN & ANDREA		1900	1.5	11.9	999	499	0	204800	30850
206-108	109	190	CARTER ROAD			NIX JONATHAN & ANDREA		1900	2	11.9	1073	1073	0	204800	30850
206-110	101	264	CARTER ROAD			WHITE MARK D & MARIE S		1971	1	4.9	1698	0	0	102900	25250
206-111	101	221	CARTER ROAD			BESSONE DOUGLAS D &	BESSONE JANE MARKHAM	1972	1	6.5	1070	0	0	69400	24150
206-112	130	0	CARTER ROAD			MCBRIDE JOSEPH & MAUREEN LALLY		0	0	3.3	0	0	0	0	15953
206-113	101	265	CARTER ROAD			MCBRIDE JOSEPH & MAUREEN LALLY		1973	2	3	806	806	286	101300	22400

47	Bidwell House
42 N4688390 E656125	Shaker Mill Brook Fulling Mill Site
N4688430 E656175	
904 See Map	Bidwell Park
804	North Becket Cemetery

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN TOWN OF BECKET



Appendix - A.3



Mullen House Evaluation & Cost Estimates

North Becket Village Appendix A.3 Historic District



Site #	Historic Site
31	Jonathan W Wheeler House
32	Hendriks House
33	Sean Mulholland House
34	Becket Antheneum/Library
35	Becket Arts Center
36	Becket Federated Church
37	Federated Church Parish House
38	Becket Town Office Building
39	St. Matthews Church
43	Mullen House
44	McCormick House
45	Miss Church's Barn
46	Frank Prentice House
48	Norcott House
50	Becket Silk Mill
51	Prentice House
52	Old Basket Shop Shed
53	Becket Consolidated School
54	Fmr Willis House--Briet House
55	Baptist Parsonage
56	Ariel Raymond House
57	Old Phil Raymond House
58	S.W. Taylor House
59	Eames-Molineaux House
60	Pomeroy-Spencer House
61	Rogers House
62	McCarthy House
63	Old Messenger Homestead
63	Old Messenger Homestead
64	Wright Barnes House
903	Ballou Park
33a	Stanley House
40a	H. Cerelia Snow House
40b	"Long House"/Simmons House
40c	Old Higley Apothecary Shop
40d	Davis Home
40e	Old Post Office Building
49a	Higley House
49b	Raymond's Store

HISTORIC MULLEN HOUSE BECKETT, MASS

JSP 2004

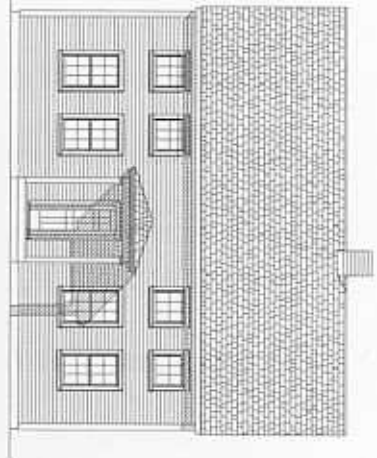


HISTORIC MULLEN HOUSE RENOVATION
CORNER OF BUCKLE HILL ROAD AND ROUTE 1
NORTHBECKETT VILLAGE, BECKETT, MA

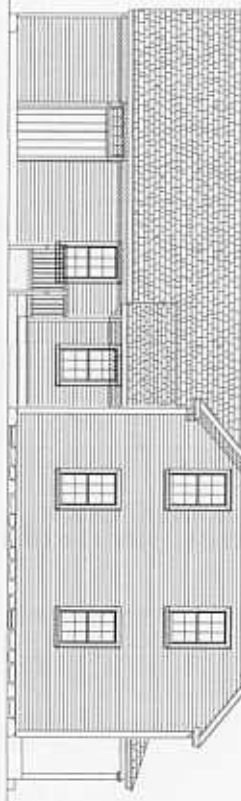
PROPOSED
ELEVATIONS

SCALE: AS SHOWN
DATE: 1 MARCH 04
DRAWN BY: JSP
CHECKED BY: JSP
THE SCALE AND DETAILS OF THIS PROJECT

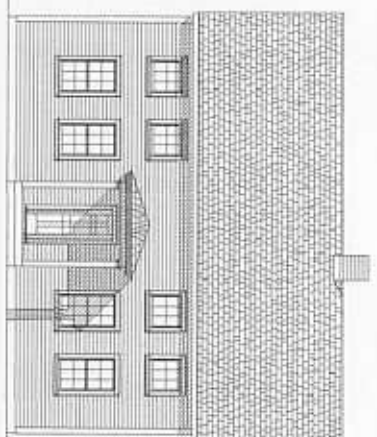
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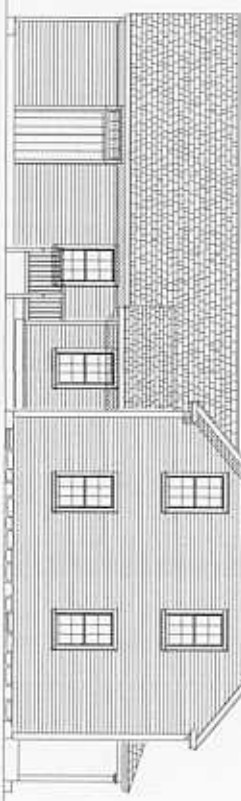
HISTORIC MULLEN HOUSE
BECKETT, MASS
JRP 2004



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Appendix A.4

ARCHITECT
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22 November 2002

HISTORIC MULLEN HOUSE EVALUATION

SITE

There are no visible curb cuts (snow banks obscure some of edge) nor parking. The concrete walk leading to the back porch is degraded (but useful) but will not fulfill accessibility. There is some vegetation encroaching on the north of the house about the Ell, but the grass has been maintained. Drainage around the building seems adequate except in the southwest back porch area where a swale should direct water around the building.

Need - parking, swale at porch area, accessibility

Long term - maintenance plan, landscaping

FOUNDATION/MASONRY

The main house foundation shows signs of recent upkeep including placement of new masonry block at interior of granite cap stones and the wooden structure is well out of the ground. The old stonework (mortared or pointed; unknown) shows only minimal signs of settling (minor bulging at south); no structural deficiency was noted. The chimney seems a modern structure in good condition including flashing but minor degradation on the exterior (two or three broken or missing bricks). The back Ell foundation (dry laid) seems intact except for pronounced settling (may be wooden structural deficiency), but is open to weather with numerous through joints. The basement floor is gravel and dry on a rainy day except for a minor area at the southwest corner (the corner facing the arts center) which has minor evidence of water running in silt.

Need - perimeter drainage on uphill portion, mason to assess chimney for use

Long term - detailed review of rear Ell foundation

STRUCTURE

The attic is dry and shows no sign of leakage or structural deficiency. The second floor walls, ceilings and floors seem level and plumb and show no sign of problems except the wall which is adjacent to the junction with the south roof of the Ell. The first floor is similarly stable except for missing plaster adjacent to the front door and "bounce" in the front two rooms. The southernmost room joists have evidence of post hole beetles (beneath the bark of the antique tree section joists) and some of the joists are probably deficient. The Ell floor is quite settled and the condition of the wood structure is suspect. To occupy the Ell would require further analysis. The front porch structure seems intact but the rear porch floor needs total replacement (the roof structure seems intact).

Need - study and stabilize the Ell floor structure, replace or augment the first floor degraded joists, repair Ell to main house connection (Ell roof area), replace back porch floor (perhaps as part of accessibility work)

Long term - maintenance plan, determination of any active destructive insects (and removal)

THERMAL AND MOISTURE PROTECTION

Attic insulation is approx. 8" of either cellulose or loose fiberglass. Wall insulation is unknown; floor insulation non existent. The roof is slate and the main house roof about 95% intact (no leakage was observed in the rain). The Ell slate is about 80% intact with serious degradation at the fall line of the main house eave, and water was evident in the back room of the ell, south eave side. The foundation is high and the structure has been protected from moisture.

Need - repair of roof, assess additional insulation possibilities

Long term - plan for roof upkeep and/or replacement.

DOORS AND GLAZING

Exterior doors are inadequately sealed; all doors and windows are single thick glass and uninsulated but not degraded. The antique storm windows are in fair condition. Interior doors seem adequate and knobs seemed in working order.

Need - replace all broken glass panes (only a few were noted), properly seal doors, assess infiltration and determine suitability of existing storm windows and hardware.

Long term - new doors and windows or at least new storm doors and storm windows

FINISHES

The exterior vinyl siding is approximately 95% intact with some minimal holes and small cracks. The area at the Ell roof junction with the house is peeling away, relating to possible structural deficiency due to water/snow damage. The exterior trim painting is degraded. The main house interior walls (antique lathe and plaster), ceilings (antique lathe and plaster 2nd fl, gyp. kitchen, acoustic tile elsewhere 1st fl) and floors are solid and intact. Only minor cracks are visible in walls and ceilings indicating no serious settling, only two sections of wall do show serious degradation (adjacent to front door and in the second floor bedroom adjacent to the Ell roof connection). The Ell walls' plaster, however, is seriously degraded. Throughout, the walls are covered by fragmentary and peeling wallpaper. The floors are perhaps 50% covered by degraded linoleum. The antique pine floors (averaging about 8" widths) seem intact throughout (painted where visible) but on the first floor are beneath modern narrow wood flooring in good condition (except front foyer which drops 3/4" to linoleum covered antique pine). All of the wood trim and windows are painted and in fair condition.

Need - exterior vinyl repairs, trim paint, interior wall restoration (steam off or seal peeling paper), interior cosmetic repairs and paint.

Long term - floor leveling and refinish throughout, Ell interior finishes replaced entirely (wall and ceiling plaster removed and new gyp. bd, floors refinish

PLUMBING

Cast iron drain and copper supply piping shows no sign of structural degradation (but water quality and piping integrity are unknown). The piping entering the Ell crawlspace is exposed to freezing and is wrapped with heat tape and insulation. At the second floor lav, the piping connections have been redone in pvc, condition unknown). Fixture functions (claw foot tub, old tiny lav sink, steel kit. sink) were not assessed at this time, but the toilet is cracked. The water heater seems newer but has been in disuse and will probably require replacement. A water pump in the basement is also unassessed for functionality. A well is on site. Town septic is assumed. .

Need - A detailed plumber's review, new water heater, new toilet, new accessible lav

Long term - appoint kitchen with new sink and dishwasher

HVAC

Steam radiators and cast iron piping (rusty surfaces) in place but untested. The boiler was last checked Nov. '97; must be serviced and assessed (possibly requiring replacement). An older oil tank in place should be reviewed.

Need - service assessment of working condition of furnace and heat system

Long term - consider alternative systems, maintenance plan

ELECTRICAL

The electrical system shows signs of modern work, but much older conduit and fixtures are in place. The service and meter are older. The panel is a 60 amp service with screw fuses. Most of the wiring is old steel wrapped conduit. Many switches are antique and most fixtures are antique and not to code.

Need - an electrician's review is warranted as well as elec. Co. service review, probably need new 200 amp service, some new electrical fixtures and replacement wiring and switches

Long term - probably whole new electrical wiring, fixtures and service (some may pass "for now")

ACCESSIBILITY

No accommodations currently exist for accessible use of the structure.

Need - accessible path from parking to all functioning portions of the building - at least one accessible parking space, stable surfaced walkway to accessible entry (level with 1st fl and 32" clear wide passage door), accessible path throughout the building (36" clear path and 32" clear passage doors; all level), accessible features of kitchen if provided (34" high sink with knee space, 5' clear turning radius; oven, cabinets and other features to code), accessible lavatory if one is provided in the building (code conforming features), lift or elevator to second floor if occupied.

Long term - the current stair does not conform to code for steepness, any new accessible project may include rebuilding or replacement of the stair or creation of a new stair. If any portion of the project means to go ahead without accessibility accommodations, a variance may be sought from the Architectural Access Board to waive or delay conformance where feasibility can be shown as hardship

HEALTH AND SAFETY

A lead paint assessment and recommendations are needed. The steepness of the existing staircase and adequacy of existing handrails should be reviewed by the building official.

Need - determination if coating the existing painted surfaces can provide safe protection from lead exposure; determination if any other hazardous materials are present on site

Long term - maintenance plan

HISTORIC FEATURES

This building is a contributing building within a National Historic District, and the exterior should be considered important to the character of the village. Some features are significant and may warrant preservation.

“Puncheon stair” to Basement - a steep unguarded stair made up of solid blocks of wood as the entire tread and riser, not rare but also not common anymore.

Trimwork - most if not all of the original trimwork is in place, creating a possibility of maintaining historical integrity and unity of style.

Doors - many original doors and their hardware are in place. If they must be replaced for accessibility or functional reasons, perhaps storage on site or transfer to another period house would be possible.

Mantel - part of the southwest parlor mantel is apparently in place and should be preserved.

Floors, finishes - much of the antique surface is still present including painted wider board floors, cleaning, coating or covering is preferable to removing or sanding.

Cabinetry - several pieces of degraded older cabinetry are in use in various locations throughout the building, basement and Ell. These include some nice older pieces such as the back ell privy, and the cabinet in the opposite corner which still shows painted graining and hand forged nails. These should be saved or donated for an appropriate use.

Room layout - the original layout is nearly present with the exception of removal of a probable central chimney and stair. If the current layout is deemed unsuitable for the proposed use, a detailed measured plan of existing conditions should be created and filed for information/future restoration.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN TOWN OF BECKET



Appendix - A.5



Public Participation

Appendix A.5

Mullen House Task Force Minutes of 6/2/03 Meeting

Present: Ken Smith, Ann Smith, Harry Hendricks, Jim Soluri, Gil Falcone, Mercedes Gallagher, Rob Gorden, Jack Young, Sid Cholmar, Eve Cholmar, Rita Furlong. Also present was Bryan Boeskin of Berkshire Regional Planning Commission.

Ken spoke to the Selectmen after the unanimous vote in favor of the Mullen House at the annual town meeting. The Selectmen gave the task force the authority to continue on with its work of turning the Mullen House into a center for education and the environment. If we have questions that need legal counsel, we do have access to Sally Bell, Town Counsel, but all requests should go through Richard Furlong first. We have authority to apply for grants, as an official town committee. According to the Board of Health, we can use one septic system for two buildings, if the buildings have the same owner.

Bryan Boeskin of BRPC said that a CDP (Community Development Plan) grant of funds allocated for Becket has not been used. There was \$30,000 earmarked for Becket, which can be used for municipal planning purposes. The funding comes from several state agencies.

BRPC put together a Scope of Services (SOS), which is a plan for Becket's pre-planning on how to spend the money. The state has already approved the Scope of Services. No matching funds are needed. We can create a mini-master plan. On the SOS, the Housing Elements (tasks 1 and 2) have already been done. The remaining Elements (Environmental and Resource Protection, Economic Development, Transportation, and Putting it All Together) have yet to be done. The transportation tasks should focus on bicycle and walking. There is about \$12,000 of the CDP left.

BRPC's goal is how to accomplish the town's goals and still fit in with Boston's rules. We cannot rewrite the SOS, without having to have it all reapproved by Boston. It took a long time for Boston to approve the SOS so we should leave it as it is, just try to make our plans fit within the general descriptions. The SOS was written somewhat vaguely, so we do have some leeway. In the final process, the State will determine if the elements of the SOS were met.

There are certain things that must be included. There must be data profiles. For the housing element, it included housing stock and maps. The state really likes graphs, charts and data.

Grant writing assistance can be included in the CDP.

Bryan wants to know how to fit CDP in with big picture of goals for the Mullen House, village as a whole, and town-wide. What are the planning tasks that need to be accomplished? They can provide staff. There is about \$12,000 of planning services available. Bryan's job will be to decide how to sell the town's ideas to the state without changing the SOS approved tasks.

Planning goes beyond just the Mullen House. Tie in village, and how all the parts (school, Atheneum, arts center, gorge, etc.) interrelate.

There is an economic aspect to the Mullen House. When it is operating as envisioned, there will be some jobs, and it will bring in visitors.

Appendix A.5

We need to solve the septic/water issues and the issue of a public toilet.

The major industry in Becket is the second home industry. This provides economic benefit, and cultural benefit. The village is and can be more of a hub.

We could beautify the village, and put the electrical wires underground. We would need to show this in a plan.

Bryan will be the lead contact at BRPC, but there is a whole team working in Pittsfield. The planning could be for the whole village. Part of the plan could be an assessment of what specifics are needed at the Mullen House. Developing the big picture is important to get further funding.

The town master plan never got off the ground because there was not enough town involvement. The completion date for using the CDP money is June 2004.

Bryan will find legal and financial models for town owned buildings that are used by independent organizations.

There are also CDBG (Community Development Block Grants), which could flush out the details.

How do all the groups involved make up the cultural face of the town? Surveys. What are needs? What is proposed?

We could have a “Charette” (open discussion for planning purposes) for use of the building and the village.

Bryan will take the info he got from this meeting and in 2 weeks will come back with a proposal of what to do and how long it will take. He will get us a list of grants that can be applied for. He wants to have a plan that keeps moving forward.

He advised us that meetings eat up money. It is not efficient for him to come to every meeting.

BRPC will repackage our info to present it in a new way so that the State will accept it. This can include an assessment and a report to the town meeting.

When applying for grants, many funders do not want to be the sole funder. We should leverage everything we can. The town has already approved and set aside about \$24,000 to be used for septic and well work. This can be used as matching funds. There may also be money available through Jacob’s Ladder Trail Association.

Bryan will use Ken as his contact, and Ken will forward info from Bryan on to other Task Force members. We need to get someone from BRPC out here to see village and Mullen house.

Next meeting of the Task Force is June 16 at 6:00 PM.

>
>>MULLEN HOUSE TASK FORCE
>>
>>Minutes of June 16, 2003, 6 p.m. at Becket Town Hall
>>
>>Present were Ken and Ann Connell Smith, Eve and Sid Cholmar, Rita
>>Furlong, Mercedes Gallagher, Rob Gorden, Ann Spadafora, Gil Falcone, Jack
>>Young, and Jim Soluri,
>>
>>Septic System: Rob and Mercedes measured site for the septic system.
>>There is much less space than we thought on the Verizon property. The
>>Arts Center has only a holding tank which needs to be cleaned out once a
>>month (in season). Mark Volk designed the septic system for the Mullen
>>House in 1996 for the front of the house. Because the barn has been razed,
>>it now may be possible to put the system in the back of the house. An
>>update of the plan would cost \$500. A new plan (necessary if we move the
>>system) costs \$2,500. Four perc tests were made. An infiltration system
>>or composting toilet would decrease the mandated size 40%. Mercedes, Rob,
>>Rita and Ann Spadafora volunteered to meet with Bill Fuller to get an
>>estimate of what we will need.
>>We still must know what our needs will be with regard to a septic system.
>>Also the Arts Center must be involved in the planning if they want to tie
>>into our system. The higher cost of a system which will accommodate the
>>Arts Center will have to be paid for by them. Rob will bring this up at
>>their meeting on June 24th. We do not expect them to have the cash for
>>this expenditure but to help with the grant writing. The selectmen are in
>>favor of combining a septic system for the two buildings.
>>A public toilet would also necessitate a larger septic system than we need
>>for the Mullen House personnel's use. The town has offered to provide
>>maintenance for a public toilet.
>>
>>BRPC Planning Proposal: Bryan Boeskin's proposal was studied in depth.
>>\$12,000 are available to the town of Becket. His proposal is divided
>>between planning services for the Mullen House and for the village area.
>>We went through each task description deciding which tasks we could do
>>ourselves, which could be shared and which should be handled by the BRPC.
>>Ken will call Bryan and Bryan will incorporate these decisions into a
>>revised planning proposal. We will sign off on this plan at our next
>>meeting.
>
>The next meeting will be held on Monday, June 30th at 6 p.m.
>>

Mullen House Task Force

Minutes, June 30, 2003

Present were Rita Furlong, Ann and Ken Smith, Rob Gorden, Mercedes Gallagher, Gil Falcone, Eve and Sid Cholmar.

The group discussed Bryan Boeskin's revised plan and cost proposal. A motion was made to remove #19, bringing the cost at maximum to about \$12,000, and to submit the proposal to the selectmen. This was seconded and unanimously approved. Rita and Rob will make the presentation to the selectmen on Wednesday.

We discussed two of the tasks that can be accomplished by the task force:

1. #9: confirm property boundaries, ownership status for the Mullen House and adjacent properties- provide parcel map info. Rita will ask the town manager if Sally Bell, the town attorney can help us with this. She will also ask for a copy of the deed.
2. #10: develop alternatives for relocation of well and/or septic leach field, confirm feasibility of connection to Arts Center and provision for public restroom. Mercedes spoke with Mark who created the 1996 plan. He told her that this septic system would be enough for 330 gallons a day, 100 people per day. This would take care of our needs as well as those of the Arts Center. The area behind the house is too wet for a septic system. So we will probably use the 1996 plan as is, which will entail digging a new well. The plan shows a 2 ½ foot rise above the septic system. It will cost approximately \$15,000 to build the system. Connecting it to the Arts Center will cost \$8000 more. The well will cost about \$4,000. \$22,000 is available from the town. We hope to get a matching grant. It is possible that the \$12,000 grant for planning can be used for a matching grant, making a total of \$37,000 in matching grants. There may be an engineering plan done recently to connect the septic system to the Arts Center. Concerning a public restroom, Gil described the facilities at the Ashwilticook walk. They are in simple structures, very clean, no water needed, no smell, no sink, just dry-wipes.

The next meeting will be on Monday, July 7th at the town hall at 6 p.m.

Mullen House Task Force

Minutes, July 21, 2003

Present were Rita Furlong, Ann and Ken Smith, Rob Gorden, Mercedes Gallagher, Gil Falcone, Eve and Sid Cholmar.

Rita brought the updated septic design plan made by Foresight Land Services.
Rob brought information on the Clivus New England Inc. toilet.

Eve delivered to Bryan the following:

- A copy of the deed
- A copy of the updated septic design plan
- A map of the historic district

Rob will call Bryan to find out what else he needs.

Rita will ask Richard to call Sally Bell to find out if we need a title search.

Rita and Rob attended a selectmen meeting. They gave full permission to go ahead with our plans for the Mullen House.

Jim and Harry are working on the floor plan. We will need a bathroom with handicapped access. It must be 6' x 10'. The closet by the kitchen can be eliminated to create that space. We need to contact the possible users to find out what space requirements they have so that the floor plan can be developed for the second floor as well as the first and so that we can get estimates to start work.

We need to develop a realistic time estimate that we can give to the potential users.

After a discussion, it was agreed that we confused #2 and #14. We can arrange a meeting with the potential users to determine facility program requirements (#14), but will need Bryan to facilitate the meeting. We will need the BRPC to conduct a charette with key stakeholders and interested residents to float Village Concept with Mullen House as central anchor (#2).

Mercedes and Rob will meet with Mark of Foresight Land Services to go over the septic design possibilities, with special attention given to placing the septic system in the back of the house. It is necessary to test the well, flow rate and water quality, to see if it can be used as is.

>Mullen House Task Force
 >Minutes, Sept. 8, 2003
 >
 >Present were Ken and Ann Connell Smith, Rita Furlong, Mercedes
 >Gallagher,
 >Jack Young, Sid Cholmar, Jeff Penn, Rob Gordon, Gil Falcone, Jim Soluri,
 >Henry Hendricks, Eve Cholmar.
 >
 >Ken reported that BRPC is coming along with the plan. They will
 >arrange to
 >have a charette of the people in North Becket Historical District. We
 >looked over the map with which they are working and decided that the
 >boundaries should be extended on Brooker Hill to Lovers Lane, the
 >Washington town lines to Pleasant Street, Route 8 portion to Benton Hill
 >Road and to all properties on Maple Street.
 >
 >We will arrange the charette for the stakeholders in the Mullen House.
 >Jeff recommended that we have a firm plan of existing conditions. At the
 >charette, we should ask for everything on our wish list. Once the plan is
 >submitted, it is set and difficult to change. Primary stakeholders are the
 >BLT, Westfield Wild and Scenic and the Nature Conservancy. Others are the
 >Arts Center, Becket Washington School, and possibly the Becket Athenaeum.
 >The Becket Land Trust has submitted its wish list. This list will be sent
 >to the others with a request for their wish list.
 >
 >Do we need a lift? Historic houses in historic districts do not need
 >one
 >if there is a meeting room on the first floor and the upstairs is not
 >public.
 >
 >Mercedes and Rob met with Robert Volk. He recommended that we put in
 >an
 >infiltration system. This will allow the septic system to be only one foot
 >higher than the ground. That way it could be used for parking. It will be
 >\$300 to \$500 to do the final septic plan. He pencilled in two parking
 >areas. We will ask BRPC to subcontract the parking plan to Volk who will
 >charge \$200 for that in addition to the septic plan. The hook up to the
 >Arts Center will cost about \$10,000 extra. Total will be \$20,000 to
 >\$25,000. BRPC could still do the signage.
 >
 >Rob will give Jeff all the cost estimates that he has.
 >
 >Rob priced the independent standing composting toilets used at the
 >Ashuwticook trail. It cost \$23,000. Jeff thinks we need to do more
 >research. He knows that indoor composting toilets are \$1,300. The housing
 >for the outdoor toilet could probably be built for less \$20,000.

>
>To explore a curb cut onto Route 8, we must talk to the Planning Board
>and
>Bill Elovirta to make sure this is allowed and is a good idea.
>
>Mercedes is eager for us to have an estimated time line so that
>possible
>stakeholders will know when they could expect to have use of space in the
>house. It was decided that we would start by finding out when grants are
>due.
>
>Ken will explore dates for the Mullen House charette. Sept. 27th was
>set
>as a tentative date depending on people's availability. It should take
>place at the Mullen House.
>

Mullen House Task Force

Minutes, November 10, 2003

Present were Rita Furlong, Ann and Ken Smith, Mercedes Gallagher, Gil Falcone, Eve Cholmar, Jeff Penn, and Dorothy Schindel.

1. Minutes of September 8, 2003 were accepted as written.
2. Mass Turnpike Tourism Grant application: Ken spoke with Senator Nuciforo and Rep. Kelly. They were both very positive. Kelly made it a priority. They will write letters of support with follow-up conversations. Brian put the grant together. The applicant is the Town of Becket.
3. Wish lists from primary stakeholders: We received wish lists from The Nature Conservancy, Westfield Wild and Scenic, and the Becket Land Trust. Jeff showed us the plan of the house as it exists. We discussed the needs of the stakeholders and how the house could be remodeled to accommodate them.
4. Charrette preparation and scheduling: Jeff will present three possible plans for use of space. Monday, December 1 at 2 p.m. was set as the tentative date. Jeff will call Rob and Carrie to confirm this date. We will meet at 1 p.m. in the Community Room at the Becket/Washington School to look over the plans and get ready for the charrette. The meeting will take place there, with a walk to the Mullen House taking place at some time during the meeting.
5. Grants: the committee made plans to meet soon to establish due dates, etc.

Minutes of 1/12/04

Meeting held at Becket Town Hall

Present: Ken Smith, Rita Furlong, Rob Gorden, Gil Falcone, Jeff Penn, Mercedes Gallagher

Ken asked members if the charette had produced enough information to go forward with plans for the building. It was thought that there was excellent representation of interested parties present at the charette and it was useful. Rita and Ken suggested our agenda at this point should be to take the next step of finalizing plans for the building.

Mercedes reported that she and Rob met with Richard Furlong and he agreed that payment to Foresight for a final septic plan could come out of the Town's Mullen House account, and he will check with Bill Fuller to see if we have to pay the Board of Health application fee to submit it for approval when it's done. BRPC has already approved payment to Foresight to do the parking design out of the Community Development Funds. Because the septic plan now includes the Becket Arts Center, and the two properties would become linked once it's put in place, much discussion was had as to what type of commitment and participation we would like from them. It was decided that we would request their board to commit in writing that they want to be linked to the MH septic system (presently we have a letter stating interest) and clarifying how they would participate in contributing to the additional \$5 to \$10,000 cost of linking them to it. Options include applying for grants, other fundraising efforts, and/or making a yearly donation of \$500 to the MH operation and maintenance fund for the next 10 to 20 years in lieu of their current yearly costs for tight tank pumping. Ken will write the letter and Rob will follow up by phone to discuss options. A written response will be requested by March 15, at which time we will hire Foresight to produce the final septic plan (with or without the Art Center link) and submit it for Board of Health approval.

Jeff reported that he called Keith Fox, Bldg. Inspector, and Bill Fuller, and that both will allow many of the older standards utilized in the building (for example, width of stairway) to remain. Jeff gave out copies of his 9/02 "Rough estimates of renovation requirements" and wants to adjust the min/max costs more accurately (mostly downward!) to reflect this. He will bring the revised version to the next meeting, at which time the group can hash out a renovation plan. He suggested we can create a renovation plan with cost estimates at that time by culling out what is bare bones necessity, decide what else is truly important, and putting everything else we want onto a wish list if funds can be made available.

Other discussion

Grant activity: Jim Soluri called the MA Historical grant funding office to get the application dates (which were June and December last fiscal year) and found that there was no grant round last December, and there is no date set yet for another grant round, although they expect to have one in June. There is a National Trust for Historic Preservation planning grant due Feb. 1. Another grant opportunity may exist for communities like Becket which has a median income below the average. It was agreed the grants subcommittee should meet and report at the next Committee mtg.

BRPC Community Development Plan: Questions were raised regarding progress, and Ken said he would call Brian Boeskin and ask him for an update, and see if it's appropriate for him to come to the next meeting.

Brooker Hill Road: Jeff suggested asking Bill Eloverta if at the time the road is repaved it could be widened slightly at the end to allow on-street parking. Mercedes brought up the BRPC application to the State for a grant to the Town to stabilize the bank by the ravine, and the idea to leave it one-way and have a walkway from the MH to the Town property accessing the ravine (and parking possibly along one side of the road).

Trip to the Nature Conservancy office in Sheffield: Although the group trip was canceled because of a snowstorm Rob went on a different day and reported on the issues the organizations had once they began sharing the building (lack of storage space and electrical outlets, privacy of conference area, importance of upstairs bathroom). It was agreed that more information from them on their operational arrangements and building renovation and use would be valuable, and that a group of us should reschedule the trip sometime after the next meeting.

Next meeting date is Monday, January 26 at 4:30 at Becket Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Mercedes Gallagher

Mullen House Task Force
Meeting 1/26/04 Minutes

Meeting held at Becket Town Hall.

Present: Ken Smith, Rita Furlong, Rob Gorden, Gil Falcone, Jeff Penn, Dorothy & Stephen Schindel, Jirn Soluri, Mercedes Gallagher, Bryan Boeskin & Sari Calame, BRPC.

Bryan brought an agenda for the meeting to plan and go through a mock Public Charette. Ken asked that we do some committee business beforehand, noted that the grants subcommittee had met, and asked for a report on the grant application to the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Mercedes reported that she and Ann had met and were putting together the application. It is a planning grant and we will request funds for 3 professional services: preservation architecture (Jeff Penn), fundraising (Bonnie Parsons), and engineering (Foresight). There was general consensus approval of this approach.

One issue outstanding was how to become a member of the National Trust Forum for \$115.00 (required to apply) within the time frame for sending the application by this Saturday, 1/31. Jeff suggested that the member should be the Town of Becket, as then the Task Force and other town boards could utilize the information and services the forum membership provides. Problems noted were that our task force has no such funds, it is unlikely the Town budget does, and in any case getting a check from the Town in time would be difficult. Rob offered to take a vote of the Historical Commission to pay for the membership, but the same time problem for a Town check would still exist if approved. Jim Soluri offered to donate money for the membership, as did Stephen Schindel. Both were looking for a way to have it be a tax-deductible donation. Ken offered to bring it up to the Becket Land Trust for payment by them. It was decided that Mercedes would contact Richard Furlong for direction and Rob would pursue the Historical Commission approval.

Bryan Boeskin put up poster-sized visuals that would be displayed at the Public Charette including an aerial photo of the village area, a tax assessor parcel map color-coded to property use, photos taken in the village, and a list of village employers. Sari and he ran through questions regarding the future of the village they had prepared on a large pad on an easel. We, as the mock audience, found

there were many interesting, practical and positive ideas fostered by the discussions on these topics, including trail development, the general store and post office, old lumberyard area, etc. There were additional topics they had identified that we did not fully explore, and it is assumed that we will get to discussing them all with a larger audience at the actual Public Charette. During the process, task force members informed the BRPC representatives of updated information and suggested appropriate changes to the material to be presented.

The task force suggested the best time to hold the Public Charette would be a weeknight in March with promotion via the Berk. Eagle and Country Journal, and notice on the town's website. Rita suggested a mailing to all property owners noted on the tax assessor parcel map inviting them. Bryan reminded us that the Community Development Funds final report must be completed by June 30 of this year.

Next meeting date is Monday, February 9 at 4:30 at Becket Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Mercedes Gallagher

Mullen House Task Force (MHTF)
Minutes, Feb. 9, 2004

Present were Rita Furlong, Rob Gorden, Gil Falcone, Jim Soluri, Mercedes Gallagher, Ken Smith, Dorothy and Stephen Schindel, Sid and Eve Cholmar.

VILLAGE CHARRETTE: It was decided that it should be on Monday, March 8th at 7 p.m. at the Washington Becket School. Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) will make up and distribute a poster and press release and draft a letter to be sent to all residents of the area as well as the firemen, all city officials, etc. Ken will send the draft to all task force members for comments.

BECKET ARTS CENTER (BAC) SEPTIC CONNECTION: Rob talked to Richard Furlong who expressed great interest in having the BAC connected to our septic system as both houses belong to the town of Becket. Ken will send Joan Davidson a letter asking for a commitment from the BAC. The planned septic system, meant for a 3-bedroom house, is adequate for 100 people a day, enough to take care of both places.

MULLEN HOUSE FINANCES: We need to have something in place to receive money. What is the process? Rita will ask Richard.

ANNUAL TOWN REPORT: Dorothy and Eve will write it within next 2 weeks and email it for comment.

UPDATING SELECTMEN: Rita and Gil will do so on Feb. 18th, at their next meeting.

PURPOSE OF MHTF: Mercedes has researched the minutes of the meetings of the selectmen and found no statement as to the actual purpose of the Task Force. It was agreed that there should be a clear directive stating that the mandate is to rehabilitate the Mullen House and oversee its utilization as the Mullen House Education Center.

BROADENING OUR ROLE: By accepting the role for community development intrinsic in the Community Development Plan and participation in the village charrette, including the economic development and the trail development projects, we have broadened the scope of the MHTF mandate. This needs to be discussed and clarified.

The next meeting of the MHTF will be on Monday, February 23rd at 7:00 p.m. Jeff will present the costs of renovation. Please come ½hour early to help with the mailing for the charrette.

Respectfully submitted,
Eve Cholmar

Minutes, Feb. 23, 2004
Becket Town Hall
Mullen House Task Force (MHTF)

Present were Ken Smith, Rita Furlong, Rob Gorden, Gil Falcone, Jeff Penn, Dorothy & Stephen Schindel, Jim Soluri, Mercedes Gallagher.

Public Meeting 3/8 Village Master Plan: The press release was published in the Berkshire Eagle and members complimented the presentation. Rita brought envelopes and Ken had the address labels and signed the invitation letter and members stuffed and labeled the mailing during the meeting. It was decided the posters should be delivered to Town Hall and members would get them out to a list of places in town. Jeff will prepare information on the Mullen House renovation to be presented there.

Grants: Ken received an e-mail from Brian Boeskin suggesting we apply for a small grant with the Berkshire Taconic's Central Berkshire Fund due March 1.

Mercedes had looked over the application and agreed it was a good idea, but noted it would be up to Ann to do most of the work, as it required text to be written and e-mailed in to them in less than a week. They will talk and see if it's possible.

TNC: Ken received an e-mail from Kay Sadighi of The Nature Conservancy asking if we could show the Mullen House to their new Westfield River Project Manager, Bill Toomey, this Friday around noon. Mercedes volunteered and will set it up with Kay.

Becket Arts Center (BAC) Septic Connection: Ken received a response from BAC to our letter regarding the septic system. After a short discussion it was decided to take it up at the next meeting.

Renovation Plan: Jeff led the discussion to clarify our cost estimates. As a group the members went over each item on the 'Rough Estimates' list Jeff had prepared 9/24/03. All aspects of the building needs and anticipated costs were discussed in detail, and an actual cost estimate was assigned for each included item. Jeff will revise the earlier plan for approval at our next meeting.

Next meeting: Monday, March 22 at 4:30 at Becket Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,
Mercedes Gallagher

Mullen House Task Force (MHTF)
Minutes of March 22, 2004 meeting

Present were Rita Furlong, Rob Gorden, Gil Falcone, Jeff Penn, Mercedes Gallagher, Sid and Eve Cholmar.

Grants: \$3000 was received from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Thank you, Ann and Mercedes. We requested \$3960 so we need to reallocate the funds accordingly. One item in the application was for further structural analysis and assessment. This can be eliminated because in the Planning Proposal from the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC), item#8, \$600 was for a detailed cost estimate for property rehabilitation. Some of the \$3000 can be used to design the parking lot and septic system. We hope to arrange a collaboration between BRPC and Forsythe on this. Mercedes will send a press release about the receipt of this grant to the media, including the Springfield Republican.

Bill Toomey, the new Nature Conservancy person for our area, met with Mercedes and visited the Mullen House. He recommended the 1772 Foundation to us as an excellent source of funding. The 1772 Foundation exists for the rehabilitation of historic buildings.

A town account, the Mullen House Fund, has been set up to receive and distribute moneys, Rita reported.

Bonny Parsons: She is the Western Mass. Renovations specialist. She will review the final look of the building and could write a description of the building. She may have ideas for funding and help write grants. We could ask her how she thinks we might use her. Jeff will speak with her.

Parking and Signage: If Forsythe can do the code compliance, BRPC could pay them the BRPC Planning Proposal item #4, for parking requirements and signage needs of \$900.

Floor plan for Mullen House: Jeff distributed the final proposed floor plan for the house which we accepted. The Becket Land Trust will use the room to the left of the back door (the main entrance) as an office. That room can be insulated and made suitable for winter use without destroying the wood paneling. It will be an excellent place to oversee the entrance. With this plan in place, Jeff can begin to write specifications and a description of work to be done. He will make a final estimate, which will include siding and painting. We will ask Ken to speak to Bryan to pay Jeff \$600 for item #8 in the planning proposal for the detailed cost estimate for property rehabilitation.

Becket Arts Center (BAC): They have no one to write grants. We need to write a letter to the selectmen requesting that they add an item to their lease paying us a yearly fee for the septic system connection. A rough draft will be submitted at our next meeting.

Meeting with the selectmen: Rita and Gil went to a selectmen's meeting and reported on our progress. They would like us to put in the connection to the BAC and a public toilet on the property. With reference to a plan for the village, we have become the Community Development Board by default. They asked that we collect names of people who would be interested in joining such a board.

The next meeting will be on April 12th at the town hall.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Eve Cholmar

Mullen House Task Force (MHTF)

Minutes of April 12, 2004 meeting

Present were Ann Connell Smith, Rita Furlong, Rob Gorden, Mercedes Gallagher, Sid and Eve Cholmar.

Temporary office: Mercedes informed us that Bill Toomey of the The Nature Conservancy has made an offer on a house on Leonhardt Road in Becket. He will need an office starting in June. We thought that he might use one of the front rooms in the Mullen House. It could be fixed up and receive electric and telephone service. Of course, we need to find out if he would be willing to be there during construction. Ken will explore this with him.

Flooding in basement: Rob reported that there were 6" of water in the basement in early April. This will need attention.

Bidding: If the cost of the job is less than \$10,000, only three bids are needed, according to town rules.

1772 Foundation: Ann will look at the website and write a letter to them describing our project.

MA. Historical Commission grant: Rob received a brochure stating a June 26th deadline for applications. There will be a meeting at the Lee Library tomorrow at 4 p.m. Mercedes will go.

Hilltown application: Eve will speak with Bruce Garlow about our \$600 application.

Mark Volk of Foresight Land Services: He submitted plans for the septic system, well and parking lot to Mercedes and Rob. Only the handicapped parking space will be paved. The rest will have gravel, letting grass grow through. There will be two areas. One will have 15 spots and a turnaround at rear of lot. The second will be over the septic tank with head in parking off Brooker Hill Road. The holding tank will be in front.

Curb cut on Route 8: Rob spoke with Mass Highway. We would need to apply to them. We decided not to have an exit to Rt. 8.

Public toilet: Mark suggested extending the building at end of shed for the public toilet. It should be 6 ½' x 10' and be in keeping with the character of the house. It will need heating for composting to work. The town will maintain it. It will not be open in the winter. This project can wait until we have enough money for it, but the space for it is set.

Letter to selectmen: A letter was written suggesting to the selectmen that an assessment of \$500 a year for 10 years for the connection to the septic system be paid to the Mullen House Operating Fund by the Becket Arts Center. Ken will sign it and send it to Joan Davidson Winston to co-sign it before it is sent to the Selectmen.

Payments: Ken will ask BRPC to pay Foresight \$900 for item #2 in the Mullen House Site Planning Services. He also will ask them to pay Jeff Penn \$600 for item #8.

The next meeting will be at 7 p.m. on April 26, 2004.

Mullen House Task Force (MHTF)

Minutes of April 26, 2004 meeting

Present were Ken and Ann Connell Smith, Rita Furlong, Rob Gorden, Mercedes Gallagher, Gil Falcone, Jeff Penn, Bill Toomey, Jim Soluri..

Grants: Ken announced receipt of the \$3,000 check from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Rita will deliver it to Richard Furlong. Ann reported that we received a letter that day from the Berkshire Taconic Foundation turning us down on our request for \$600 from their Central Berkshire Fund.

Mercedes attended the presentation of the MA Historical Commission at the Lee Library on 4/13. Some recent years they have had between \$6 and \$8 million to award. This year they have only \$500 to \$700 thousand, similar to last year when they had 40 applicants and awarded 14 grants with a maximum of \$50,000. They suggest buying 1 or 2 Dept. of Interior guideline books, and hiring an experienced consultant to fill out Section 5 of their application. They require a 50% match, but 75% of the requested amount as “cash in the bank” because their grant funds are disbursed as a reimbursement at intervals only after work is done and paid for. None of the monies we’ve received or applied for to date, would count as a match for their grant. Work on the building could not be started until after the grants are awarded on November 10th, as they do not fund retroactively. They strongly recommend that the “cash” equaling 75% of the applied-for amount be “in the bank” when the application is made on July 25, and it must remain there until their Nov. 10th award date with no guarantee of a grant. In addition, if the grant is awarded, they require a conservation easement be placed on the property and that all future renovations be approved by them. She recommended that we look for other sources. Rita suggested we might consider it for a specific portion of the project. It was suggested to consider it in the context of what other options we have.

Bill explained the 1772 Foundation and their involvement with similar consortiums of organizations and renovation projects. He understands they are a well-funded foundation and encouraged us to pursue support from them. He gave Ken a draft one-page letter he put together that he suggested be reviewed, revised appropriately, and submitted to them by the Task Force. Ken and Ann will prepare and send a letter to the 1772 Foundation.

TNC: Ken reported that Bill Toomey is in process of purchasing a home in Becket and is interested in having his office at the Mullen House as early as June. Ken welcomes this development as it will put the Task Force into a higher gear to accomplish our goals.

Jeff and Bill had visited the Mullen House prior to the meeting and found the back room next to the kitchenette to be in good enough condition to be utilized as a temporary office.

Water and Septic: The plan by Mark Volk of Foresight was discussed. Motion made by Mercedes to accept the Foresight plan with the following changes: adding the Becket Arts Center connection and the Public Toilet addition to the back of the building. Rita seconded. All approved.

Ken asked that Foresight send a final bill for \$900 to BRPC to come out of the

Community Development Fund budget for Parking & Signage, and the balance of \$600 to the Town of Becket Mullen House Fund.

Mercedes will check with Mark to see if he can provide us with a final plan in time to be submitted to the Becket Board of Health at their meeting next Wednesday, May 5. If so, Rob will go to their meeting and present it for approval.

Rob will ask Richard Furlong and Bill Eloverta for a meeting to discuss the plan and the process for getting bids and construction. Rob, Gil and Mercedes will try to attend. It was decided that the Arts Center connection should be bid as an addendum so that decisions could be made based on actual costs and available funds.

Electric, Heat & Telephone: The cost to upgrade these needed services was discussed. One idea floated with TNC prepaying rent for a period of time to the Mullen House fund, which would then be available to the Task Force to make these upgrades. More discussion on how we could provide these needed services next meeting.

Next meeting: Monday, May 10 at 7 PM at Becket Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,
Mercedes Gallagher

Mullen House Task Force
Minutes

May 24, 2004

Present: Ann Smith, Ken Smith, Rita Furlong, Jeff Penn, Gil Falsone, Rob Gorden, Mercedes Gallagher, Dorothy Schindel, Steve Schindel

1. Minutes of previous meeting read and approved.
2. Harry Hendricks has resigned from the Task Force, since he has moved out of town.
3. The Selectmen have asked the task force to be the liaison between the town and the users of the building. They sent us a sample of the lease which the Veterans had with the Town. The Task Force will morph in to the Mullen House oversight board. Eve, as secretary, should send a response letter that the task force is willing to oversee the management of the Mullen House.
4. The Selectmen also asked if the Task Force members would be willing to spearhead ideas and planning for the Becket village. The task force members said that at this time, they hold off on deciding whether to take on the whole Becket Village. For now they will continue to focus on the Mullen House.
5. 1772 Foundation is interested in the MH project, but they can not give to a town. They will only give to a non-profit charitable organization. If the organization had a long term lease of the Mullen House from the town (50 years or so) they could fund. The Becket Land Trust is not in a position to take a long term lease from the town for the Mullen House, and it is not in the BLT's charter. Ken spoke with an attorney in the Northampton area who specializes in forming non-profits. He is willing to help for free. It was decided that a new separate non-profit charitable educational organization must be formed. We must come up with a mission statement. Once there is a Mission statement, the paperwork creating the non-profit can be prepared. There are probably umbrella organizations which it could operate under, until it receives its own tax-exempt status, and all funds would be specifically earmarked for the MH.. As a non-profit, it must have a Board of Directors.
6. It was suggested that all Task Force members come up with drafts of a Mission Statement. The drafts can then be circulated and compiled and revised. The mission Statement should take in to account the environmental and educational goals. The Mission Statement might determine what the name of the Organization will be called. It was suggested that each tenant of the building provide a certain number of hours of educational programs for the school or community.

7. Status of Becket Village Charette: Ken will call Brian Boeskin of BRPC to determine the status of the Charette.
8. Well. 1 bid was received and 2 more were coming in for doing the well at the Mullen House.
9. Jeff Penn will send a narrative of what the minimum is that is needed to get Bill Toomey into the MH. It was moved and seconded that we accept the figures from Jeff Penn's estimate. With that Acceptance, Brian Boeskin can issue payment to Jeff out of the grant.
10. Next meeting, Monday, June 7 at 5:00. Meeting moved to this earlier time to accommodate members attending other meetings.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Town of Becket

Community Development Plan Advisory Committee



Advisory Committee Meeting #1 Agenda

Date: Wednesday October 23, 2002

Time: 7:00

1. Introductions and Review of Scope
2. Review of Process and Committee Role
3. Review of Housing Report w/ Discussion
4. Presentation of GIS Base Maps
5. Other Business and next meeting

Attachments:

Summary of Community Development Plan Scope of Services
Proposed Community Development Plan Meetings Outline
2002 Becket Draft Housing Report

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Town of Becket

Community Development Plan Advisory Committee



Advisory Committee Meeting Notes

Date: Wednesday October 23, 2002

In attendance:

Main Points of Discussion

- Overall, the draft CDP housing plan was good.
- Some conclusions seemed to exaggerate the circumstances.
- Berkshire Housing Development Corp owns a parcel of land in town that was never used for anything.
- Septic problems are the major health issue related to homeownership, and a major cost when buying, selling or building a home in town.
- Committee confirmed that Sherwood forest has a number of seasonal houses not used year-round that may or may not have been winterized. The town is obliged to plow more roads due to this.

Introductions and Review of Scope & Review of Process and Committee Role

The scope was reviewed, the proposed CDP meeting process was explained, and the roles and responsibilities of the committee were discussed.

Review of Housing Report w/ Discussion

The housing report was discussed at length. The data and the implications of the data and the recommendations were presented. The town has participated in several programs such as housing rehabilitation and septic repair assistance. BHDC owns a parcel in town, but previous plans to develop this parcel fell through.

Presentation of GIS Base Maps

The GIS Maps were distributed.

Other Business and next meeting

Next meeting is to be scheduled at a later date.

The meeting will concern open space and resource protection, and will have an update of rural transportation in south county.

Materials for the meeting will be sent to the town for the town to copy and distribute to the committee.

Attachments Presented

Summary of Community Development Plan Scope of Services
Proposed Community Development Plan Meetings Outline
2002 Becket Draft Housing Report

Appendix A.6
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE
STATE PROGRAMS

	Community Development Fund (CDF) I & II	Ready Resources Fund (RRF)	Mass Community Capital Fund (MCCF)	Community Development Action Grant Program (CDAG)	Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP)	Public Works Economic Development (PWED)
Funding Agency	Department of Housing and Community Development	Department of Housing and Community Development	Department of Housing and Community Development	Department of Housing and Community Development	Office of Business Development	Executive of Office of Transportation and Construction
Maximum Amount	\$800,000. \$50,000 for project planning.	\$400,000 Project costs or \$50,000 Planning	\$500,000	\$1,000,000	STA and TIF negotiated by municipality.	\$1,000,000
Type of Fund	Grant	Grant –	Low Interest Loan	Grant	Tax Credit	Grant
Typical Fund Pool	\$21.8 Million FY04	\$2.9 million for both programs FY04			n/a	
Eligible Applicants	Municipalities with Populations <50,000 (non-entitlement communities)	Municipalities with Populations <50,000 (non-entitlement communities)	Non-profits and For-Profit Enterprise	EO 418 Certified municipalities	Municipalities and For-Profit Enterprises	Municipalities
Eligible Uses	Housing, ADA Compliance, Public Facilities, infrastructure, social services, business development for LMI and/or eliminate slums and blight. Planning for a wide range of CD activities.	Assist Economic Development through planning, design, engineering, construction, rehabilitation, purchase of machinery and capital equipment, working capital, credit financing, incumbent workforce training, real estate acquisition, or public service programs.	Assist Economic Development through planning, design, engineering, construction, rehabilitation, purchase of machinery and capital equipment, working capital, credit financing, incumbent workforce training, real estate acquisition, or public service progr	Assist communities to install, improve, construct , alter, enlarge, repair or remodel publically owned or managed properties. Other uses include the building , rehab and repir of facades, streets, roadways , thoroughfares, sidewalks, rail spurs, utility distribution systems.	Creation fo new jobs through: Expansion of existing operations, building new facilities, relocation of facilities and jobs. Investment Tax Credit of up to 5% and Abandoned Building Tax Deduction of up to 10%.	Design and construct roads, roadways and any other transportation projects deemed necessary for economic development by the Secretary of Transportation.
Comments					Applicant must be located within a state designated Economic Target Area (ETA).	

Appendix A.6
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE
STATE PROGRAMS

	Small Town Roads Assistance Program (STRAP)	Western Turnpike Tourism Grant Program	Investment Tax Credit (ITC)	Brownfield Tax Credit	Rehabilitation Tax Credit	Brownfield Redevelopment Fund
Funding Agency	Exectuive Office of Transportation and Construction	Massachusetts Turnpike Authority	Department of Revenue	Department of Revenue	Massachusetts Historical Commission	MassDevelopment
Maximum Amount	\$500,000	\$100,000	3% of qualified investment costs	25% of response and removal costs for Activity and Use Limitation (AUL) or 50% without AUL	20% of costs for certified historic structure ,10% for non-residential, non historic structure built before 1936	\$50,000 for Site Assessment \$500,000 Clean-up. Equity investment by applicant is required.
Type of Fund	Grant	Grant	Tax Credit	Tax Credit	Tax Credit	Grant
Typical Fund Pool		(FY02) \$1,500,000 (FY03) \$500,000	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Eligible Applicants	Municipalities with populations less than 3,500	Western Mass municipalities contiguous to the Mass Turnpike	Manufacturers, research and development corporations, and corporations engaged principally in agriculture or commercial fishing	Individuals or Enterprises generating federal taxable income	Individuals or Enterprises generating taxable incomes	Individuals, public and private entities. Applicant cannot be responsible party.
Eligible Uses	Project design costs, planning and engineering, and construction services for roads and roadways that beneficially impact the economic and public safety of the applicant community.	Wide range of eligible uses that support the promotion of tourism in Western MA.	Purchase and/or lease of of qualified tangible, depricable assets.	Clean-up costs for hazardous materials at qualified sites.	Rehabilitation of depreciable assets, i.e. building, bridge, dam, railroad car, ship.	Hazardous materials site assessment and clean-up.
Comments			Projects which qualify under EDIP may be eligible for 5% ITC.	Site must be located in an Economically Distressed Area (EDA). Applicant cannot be responsible party.		

**Appendix A.6
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE
STATE PROGRAMS**

	Predevelopment Assistance Program	Real Estate Fund	Tax Exempt Industrial Development Bonds (IBDs)	Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Program (SRF)	Clean Water State Revolving Fund Program(SRF)	
Funding Agency	MassDevelopment	Massachusetts Community Development Finance Corporation	MassDevelopment	Department of Environmental Protection- Division of Muncipal Services	Department of Environmental Protection- Division of Muncipal Services	
Maximum Amount	\$25,000	20% of Project cost or up to \$250,000	Minimum of \$1,500,000 for real estate and equipment and \$500,000 for equipment maximum of \$10,000,000			
Type of Fund	Grant	Loan	Below Market Rate Bonds	Loan	Loan	
Typical Fund Pool				\$100,000,000	\$200,000,000-\$300,000,000	
Eligible Applicants	Developers, municipalities, non-profit and for-profit entities.	Community Development Corporations (CDCs)	Qualified companies located in MA which create or retain jobs.	municipalities and community water suppliers with at least 15 residential connections	Municipalities	
Eligible Uses	Environmental etsting, marketing and feasibility ananlysis, consulting, planning and other soft costs associated with real estate development.	Flexible , short to medium term loans to finance residential, commercial and industrial real estate projects developed by CDCs.	For use by qualified manuafacturers and environmental enterprises to purchse land, buildings, new equipment or to construct and/or renovate buildings.	Engineering, design and construction of drinking water projects.	Engineering, design and construction of waste water projects.	
Comments	Requires dollar for dollar match.				50-70 Projects funded annually.	

Appendix A.6
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE
FEDERAL PROGRAMS

	Public Works Program	Economic Adjustment Program	Short Term Planning to States, Sub State Planning Regions, and Urban areas	Technical Assistance Program (Local)	Rural Business Enterprise Grants	Rural Business Opportunity Grant
Funding Agency	Department of Commerce- Economic Development Administration	Department of Commerce- Economic Development Administration	Department of Commerce- Economic Development Administration	Department of Commerce- Economic Development Administration	Department of Agriculture- Rural Development	USDA- Rural Development
Maximum Project Amount	*\$1,240,000	*\$500,000	*\$60,000	*\$53,000	*\$1,000,000	*\$50,000
Type of Fund	Grant	Grant	Grant	Grant	Grant	Grant
Typical Fund Pool	(FY03) \$203,667,500	(FY 03) \$23,734,150	(FY03) \$23,844,000	(FY03) \$1,093,843	(FY03) \$51,402,688	\$1,500,000
Eligible Applicants	Public entities, Institutions of Higher Education, public or private non-profit entities.	Public entities, Institutions of Higher Education, public or private non-profit entities.	Public entities, Institutions of Higher Education, public or private non-profit entities.	Public entities, Institutions of Higher Education, public or private non-profit entities, private individuals and for-profit entities.	Public entities and private non-profit entities outside areas of more than 50,000 people, or its immediately adjacent urban or urbanizing area.	Public entities and non-profit corporations. Service area must not have a population of more than 10,000.
Eligible Uses	Water and sewer facilities, industrial access roads, rail spurs, port improvements, skill-training facilities, technology-related infrastructure, demolition, renovation and construction of publicly owned facilities.	Creation/expansion of strategically targeted business development and financing programs such as construction of infrastructure improvements, organizational development and market or industry research and analysis. Revolving loan funds may also be used to implement a CEDS.	Preparation and maintenance of a continuous CED planning process, coordination fo multi-jurisdictional planning efforts, development of institutional cpacity, diversification fo the local economic base and implementation of programs, projects and procedures designed to create and retain permanent jobs and increase incomes.	Feasibility studies for industrial parks, business incubators, development of revitalization plans, tourism development strategies, tp sponsor economic development conferences or seminars, establish GIS for local planning and development purposes.	Technical assisatnce, purchase and/or lease of machinery and equipment creation of a revolving loan fund, to construct a building for a business incubator.	Economic Planning , technical assisatnce, training for entrepenuers or ED officials.
Comments	Applicants must have a completed and approved CEDS to be eligible for funding.	Applicants must have a completed and approved CEDS to be eligible for funding.	Applicants must have a completed and approved CEDS to be eligible for funding.		Assisted businesses must have less than 50 employees and less than a \$1 million in gross revenues.	

* This amount is the average amount awarded in a prior funding round.

Appendix A.6
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE
FEDERAL PROGRAMS

	Brownfields Assessment	Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund	Brownfields Cleanup Program	Economic Development Initiative /Brownfields EDI	Rural Housing and Economic Development	Rural Cooperative Development Program
Funding Agency	Environmental Protection Agency	Environmental Protection Agency	Environmental Protection Agency	Department of Housing and Urban Development	Department of Housing and Urban Development	USDA-Rural Development
Maximum Project Amount	\$200,000**	\$1,000,000	\$200,000 per site	\$2,000,000	\$150,000 (1.Capacity building) \$400,000 (2. Support for innovative housing and ED activities)	*\$300,000
Type of Fund	Grant	Loan	Grant	Grant	Grant	Grant
Typical Fund Pool	Total of \$100,000,000 for all programs			(FY02) \$29,000,000	(FY 03) \$25,000,000	(FY03) \$6,300,000
Eligible Applicants	Public entities and other quasi-public state sanctioned entities.	Public entities and other quasi-public state sanctioned entities.	Public entities and other quasi-public state sanctioned entities, and non-profit entities.	CDBG entitlement and non-entitlement communities	Local rural non-profits, community development corporations, state housing finance agencies, state community and/or economic development agencies.	Local non-profits including institutions of higher education.
Eligible Uses	Inventory, characterize, assess and conduct planning and community involvement related to brownfield sites.	Capitalizing a revolving loan fund and to provide subgrants to carry out cleanup activities.	To carry out cleanup activities at brownfield sites.	BEDI is designed to assist cities with the redevelopment of abandoned, idled and underused industrial and commercial facilities with expansion and redevelopment of <i>real or perceived</i> environmental contamination	1. Capacity Building - Possible activities include hiring and training staff, purchasing software and other tools, obtaining expertise from outside sources, developing an accounting system, conducting asset inventories, developing strategic plans, seeking technical assistance, improving management capability, and purchasing or leasing office space. 2. Innovative Housing and ED activities -preparation of plans, architectural drawings, acquisition of land and buildings, demolition, provision of infrastructure, purchase of materials and construction costs, use of local labor markets, job training and counseling for beneficiaries and financial services such as revolving loan funds and Individual Development Accounts or IDAs.	Establishing and operating centers for cooperative development for the primary purpose of improving the economic condition of rural areas through the development of new cooperatives and improving operations of existing cooperatives.
Comments		Loan requires 20% match.	A minimum of Phase I Site Assessment must be completed. Grant requires 20% match.	BEDI must be used in conjunction with new Section 108 guaranteed loan commitment. Projects must increase job opportunities for LMI or stimulate and retain businesses and jobs that lead to economic revitalization.		

** In certain circumstances applicants can request to waive the maximum project amount to up to \$350,000



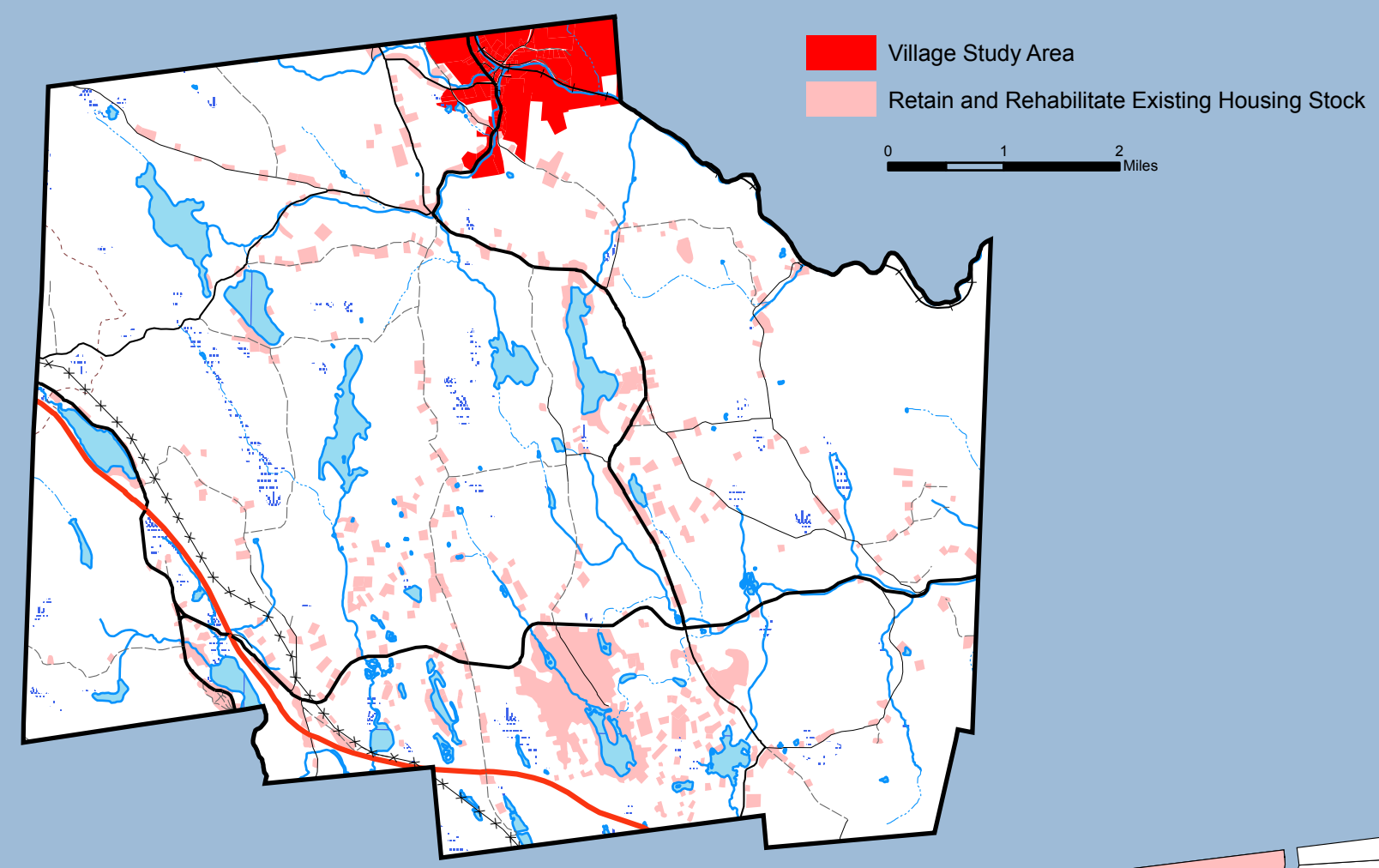
Community Development Plan

Land Use Suitability

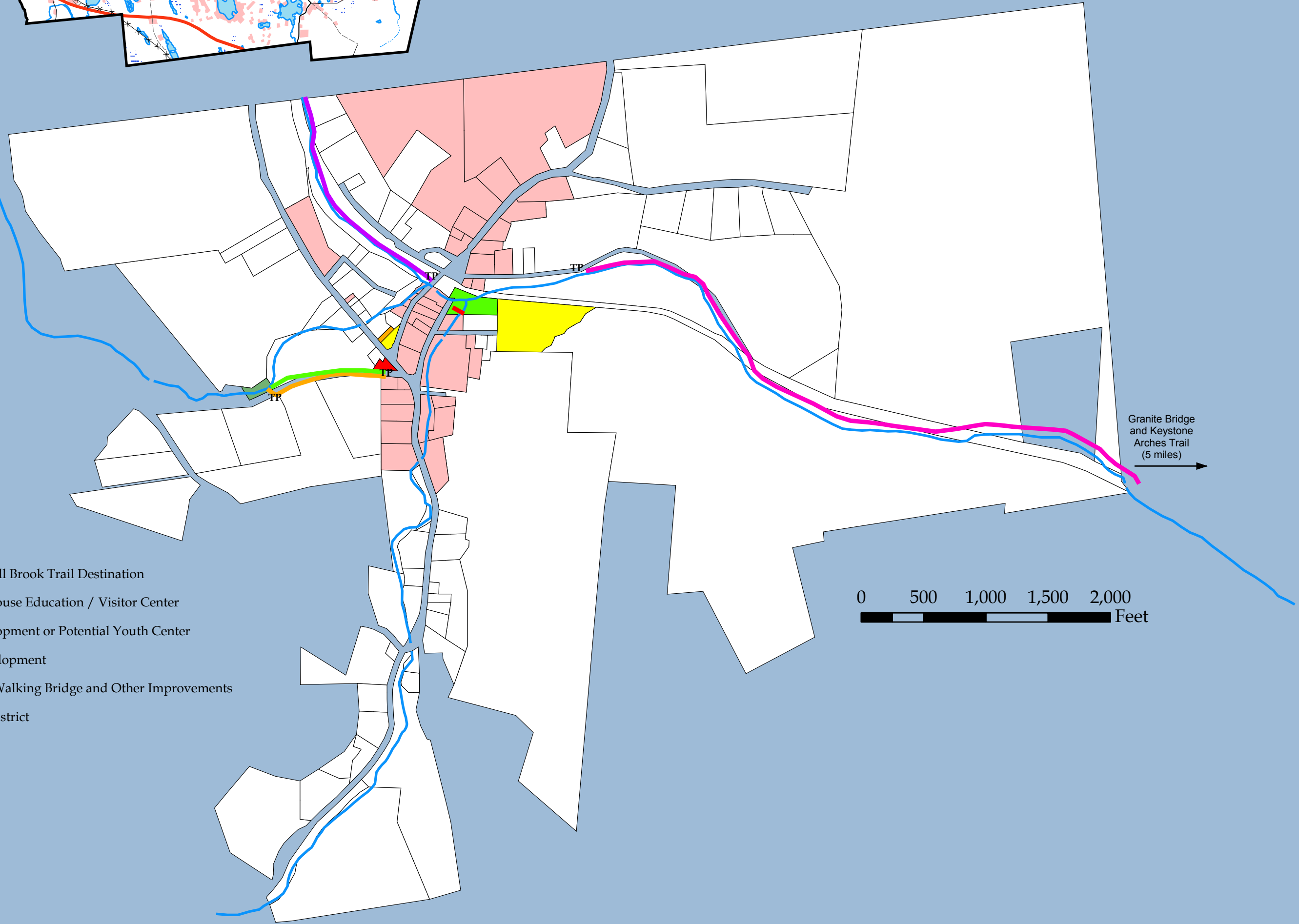
Action Map

Town of Becket

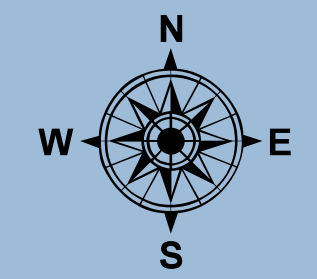
Massachusetts



- TP Trailhead / Parking
- Foot Bridge
- Fisherman Trail 1
- Fisherman Trail 2
- Shaker Mill Trail 1
- Shaker Mill Trail 2
- Proposed Shaker Mill Brook Trail Destination
- Proposed Mullen House Education / Visitor Center
- Re-Use/Infill Development or Potential Youth Center
- Re-Use / Infill Development
- Proposed Covered Walking Bridge and Other Improvements
- Maintain Historic District



Granite Bridge and Keystone Arches Trail (5 miles)



Massachusetts State Plane Meters
North American Datum 1983

This map was created by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and is intended for general planning purposes only. This map shall not be used for engineering, survey, legal, or regulatory purposes. MassGIS, Massachusetts Highway Department, BRPC or the town may have supplied portions of this data.

This project was funded through a grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation and Construction.

/cdp/bkt/projects/actionmap.mxd

June 21, 2004

Becket, Massachusetts



Open Space

This element of the Community Development Plan focused on maintaining the character of the North Becket Village area and proposing improvements to recreational venues and access to those venues.

Recommended Actions:

- Consider acquiring and converting former lumber yard site for community use.
- Move forward on final design and construction of the Mullen House Education Center
- Make improvements to municipal park facilities
- Consider design and development of a local Youth Center
- Organize Community Events
- Establish network of trails to access village venues and natural, recreational attractions

Transportation

This portion of the report consisted of a Bicycling and Pedestrian Report that looked at bicycling and pedestrian safety and compatibility primarily within the North Becket village area. The report also discusses the development of a network of off-road pedestrian trails that link various village venues and improve access and parking for key recreational areas. The key recommendations of the report are noted below.

Recommended Actions:

- Consider Bicycling safety enhancements such as cycling signage, shoulder upgrades, and pavement marking upgrades
- Install bike racks in a central location in the Village
- Work with regional organizations, such as the Berkshire Bike Path Council, to identify and apply for funding to implement proposed enhancements and to explore potential linkages to the established regional bicycling trail network.
- Establish network of trails to access village venues and natural, recreational attractions



Economic Development

This portion of the Community Development Plan reviews the economic development of the Town and then focuses on a more detailed analysis of the Town's commercial area in North Becket.

Three challenges facing North Becket in relation to economic development are:

1. Loss of key businesses, services, and jobs
2. Loss of character/identity as the economic, cultural and civic center of the Town
3. under-utilization of valuable spaces within the village area

Some of the key recommendations to allow for increased economic development opportunities are listed here:

- Build local organizational capacity to support economic development efforts in the village area.
- Develop guidelines to ensure that commercial development is localized, small-scale and compatible with the character of the village and the community at large.
- Review local by-laws to ensure that they do not pose barriers to the type of commercial development activities that would be most suitable in North Becket Village.
- Identify programs and organizations that can assist the town in developing a program for retention of successful existing businesses and support local successful establishments that consider expansion
- Consider improvements to highlight the Historic District
- Establish a Community Clean-up Day and/or an "Adopt a River or Road Program" for the Village area.
- Maintain, preserve and promote the Village's cultural treasures, i.e. the Arts Center and the Athenaeum
- Consider applying for funding to develop and implement a sign and façade improvement program
- Begin efforts to rehabilitate lumber yard site and the Mullen House Education and Visitor Center

Housing

This element addressed the fact that the Town of Becket has no qualifying single housing units that fall under Chapter 40B affordable housing. The cost of new homes being built in Becket has risen significantly since the late 1990s. The assessment also found that a significant number of housing units aging, decrepit and have building code violations, particularly in areas where summer lake cottages have been converted to year around use. Overall, there are still a number of homes that are affordable across a broad range of incomes. However, the affordability analysis did indicate some small gaps in affordability at the low and moderate-income levels.

Recommended Actions:

- Develop local capacity to address housing needs
- Review local zoning to minimize barriers to affordable housing
- Continue participation in Housing Rehabilitation Programs
- Consider options for development of affordable rental housing
- Consider options for development of affordable homeownership options
- Consider the adoption of the Community Preservation Act to finance future affordable homeownership options
- Re-apply for EO418 Housing recertification for Becket

